

Klestil cancels Arafat meeting

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Austrian President Thomas Klestil, on an official visit to Israel, said Tuesday he had cancelled a plan to meet with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Israeli President Weizman reportedly threatened to boycott Mr. Klestil's visit if the Austrian leader accepted an invitation by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Arafat for a meeting in the autonomous Gaza Strip, arguing Mr. Klestil's first visit to Israel was too important to be used for other purposes. Mr. Klestil told a news conference Tuesday he cancelled a meeting with Mr. Arafat under pressure. "I said... if it is made possible, then I would see him, meet with him where it is being arranged. But since it proved not to be possible, I have not met with him." Mr. Arafat said meanwhile that earlier this year, Israel also blocked Pakistan President Benazir Bhutto from visiting him in Gaza. "He (Klestil) has an invitation, and he is welcome to come, if not now, then after," Mr. Arafat told the Associated Press. "I hope they are not against my getting the Nobel Prize," Mr. Arafat added with a smile.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية - الراية



King receives congratulations

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday received cables from Arab and world leaders congratulating him on his 59th birthday and wishing him continued good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity. The cables came from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, President Islam Karmov of Uzbekistan, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, President of Ecuador Sixto Duran Ballen. The King also received cables from Prince Charles of Britain, and head of the Greek Orthodox church in Jerusalem Patriarch Deodoros I. To mark the occasion, the Greater Amman Education Department held a major celebration, including speeches, songs, debkas and poems. The celebration was attended by Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh, the ministry's secretaries general and education department heads.

Volume 19 Number 5769

AMMAN WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1994, JUMADA ALTHANIA 12, 1415

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

King: Jordan has won peace with honour

His Majesty, in address to the nation, warns against using false interpretations of Islam and use of mosques for 'intellectual terrorism' Jordan always stood by Arabs but found itself receiving negativism Israel has returned Kingdom's water rights, rest will be negotiated with others Jordan will not allow itself to be used as springboard for attacks against Israel

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein said Tuesday Jordan had won the battle for peace with honour and that he would not tolerate opponents of peace who base their arguments on their interpretations of the Islamic faith and mosques being used for political purposes.

In a nationwide speech, the King said Jordan had entered a new era where it would consolidate its gains in the fields of human rights, social justice, pluralism and equality.

Without naming anyone, the King also assailed Arabs for leaving Jordan at "the receiving end of their negative attitude, their lack of clarity, their waste of opportunities, their reliance on unbridled emotion, their superficial approach to the future and our nation's destiny."

The King, in the hard-hitting speech, defended Jordan's position on the issue of Jerusalem, a role, he said,

"recognised even by those who fought against us... but one denied by the ungrateful."

Reaffirming Jordan's commitment to helping the Palestinians regain their rights, the King said the Kingdom would continue to perform its role as the custodian of the holy places in Jerusalem "until a final and comprehensive peace is achieved."

He reaffirmed that Jordan's role in Jerusalem was not in any way "any diminution of the rights of the Palestinians to Jerusalem. On the contrary, it will bolster the peace of believers in God and will serve to guarantee a continuation of this peace."

"We stand by the Palestinians in their attempt to achieve their rights on their national soil along the path they have chosen," he said.

The King said Jordan was a victim of "selectivity and distortion... that blemished some of the purest images of the struggle of the Jordanian and Palestinian people, namely the decision to unify the two banks of the River

Jordan in 1950."

The King recalled that as far back as 1965, 23 years before Jordan severed legal and administrative links with the West Bank and nine years before the Arab summit in Rabat where the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was designated as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, he had made it clear that the Kingdom was ready to hand over the responsibility for the Palestinians to the PLO.

The King was referring to an address he made to the first meeting of the Palestine National Council in Jerusalem. He told the meeting that if the Arabs and Palestinians felt that Jordan "does not have the legitimacy of speaking in the name of the Palestinians who live its midst, who carry its citizenship and who have become part of its institutions, or of defending the rights of this people... and if they deem this legitimate aspect to be restricted to the PLO, then... I place on their shoulders along the responsibility

of their decision and all the consequences it entail. I consider it to be a release of our current political responsibilities."



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The King, the longest-reigning Arab monarch who turned 59 on Monday, said the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty had restored only part of the Kingdom's water rights from "one of the parties concerned with the water issue."

"Jordan will strive, in the context of comprehensive peace, to regain its water

rights in full," said the King, in an implicit reference to Syria, an upstream neighbour along the River Yarmouk.

Lashing out at opponents of the peace treaty, the King said that while Jordan was committed to respecting the freedom of opinion such freedom should not exceed unacceptable limits. "It is unreasonable and unacceptable to go to exaggerated lengths in the name of freedom of opinion, of exercising intellectual terrorism, over the people as a whole and denying the right of the majority as a whole to take a decision, which, at the end of the day, everybody must respect."

"Islam cannot be against peace, it cannot side with darkness against light, or with death against life," said the King, vowing that the pulpits of mosques "may not after today serve as places for irresponsible expression in the name of Islam."

"Islam does not condone the expropriation of the people's right to hear from these pulpits all that is good about

their religion and their life here on earth," added the Monarch.

The King said "intellectual terrorism" also meant "misrepresenting religion, faith and righteousness, of tending to deny the rights of others to life or to pass over their suffering, or not to realise that our nations have their own orphans and widows."

King Hussein, noting that Jordan and Israel were in the process of planning Israeli withdrawal from Jordanian land and removing the wire-fences and mining towards the complete restoration of Jordan's rights and sovereignty, said the Kingdom's security forces had the responsibility "of keeping this peace and rising up to its requirements in letter and spirit, not permitting our lands to be in any way a springboard or any area of action for any party opposed to peace."

The King said Jordan remained always committed to pan-Arab principles and positions even at the expense of its own national interests but

found itself "surrounded by manifestations of ingratitude..."

The King said no one could claim "they had given more than" Jordan did. "As God is our witness, we never did anything for the purpose of any gain, nor did we seek recompense, because even as we fended off the hunger threatening our children and bade farewell to our martyrs, we sought nothing but God's favour and the unity of our nation."

The King said Jordan always held aloft its principled approach to Arab causes "even when confusion

and the media, to a world capable of weaving a civilisation that would transcend the wounds of the past, understand the present, anticipate the future and enable peoples to participate fully exercise their free will."

The new era of peace in the Middle East, the King said, warranted comprehensive reform to the minutest detail to prepare Jordan to face the requirements of the new phase "... a most difficult battle in which those who are capable of patience, construction and learning will prove themselves in this world."

See page 7 for full text of King's speech

Spanish royal couple in Riyadh

RIYADH (Agencies) — King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia of Spain flew in Tuesday on a two-day visit expected to include a meeting with King Fahd.

They were welcomed on arrival from Jordan by Crown Prince Abdullah.

Their entourage included Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana and six other officials.

King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia flew to Saudi Arabia after a two-day private visit to Aqaba.

They were seen off by their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor and members of the royal family.

Clinton defends slam

KARTA (AFP) — U.S. resident Bill Clinton on Tuesday hailed predominant Muslim Indonesia's record of religious tolerance and used a new appeal for the end to associate Islam with "terrorism."

Mr. Clinton was asked after an Asia-Pacific summit why, as a Christian, he had chosen to visit the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta on Monday. He responded that he wanted to view "impressive structure himself, but also because 'Indonesia is a predominantly Muslim country that has a vibrant, Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, Hindu, and other religious groups all those areas.'"

Mr. Clinton reiterated remarks that made in Jordan at the signing of the Israel-Jordan peace accord, said that "even though we have had problems with terrorism coming of the Middle East it is inherently related to it, not to the religion, not the culture." "The tradition of Islam in Indonesia, I think, makes that point very physically," he said. "It's nothing our people in America need to know, it's nothing people in the Middle East need to know."

Jordan, Israel discuss pullout, clearing mines

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Israel discussed Tuesday arrangements for an Israeli withdrawal from Jordanian territories and the removal of mines and other obstacles along their common border.

Brigadier General Tahsin Shurdam who headed the Jordanian team to the session at a Dead Sea hotel, said that the talks will resume Nov. 23.

He said the main work at this stage was the removal of barbed wire and clearing the border area of land mines, which, he noted, would take three months to complete.

These steps require intense work by the joint committee which involves military personnel on both sides, he added.

Major General Uzi Dayan is the head of the Israeli side to the meeting.

Gen. Shurdam noted also that the same committee would also shortly meet to delineate the Red Sea naval

borders between Israel and Jordan.

He said that the Israeli side showed full understanding and cooperation in the implementation of the two articles of the treaty.

"We discussed the modalities of removing barbed wires and cleaning the minefields as well as redelineating borders as stipulated in the peace treaty," Gen. Shurdam said.

He said both parties had "charted general guidelines and laid down a timetable to implement the committee's task on the ground during the next week."

At a later stage, Jordan and Israel would demarcate the limits of their territorial waters with floating objects, as agreed in the peace treaty, Gen. Shurdam added.

Meanwhile, the head of the Jordanian delegation to the multilateral phase of the peace process on water

issues, Dr. Munther Haddadin, returned from a working group meeting in Athens and said that the discussions were successful.

The participants agreed on the need to pursue studies on water resources in the Middle East region and to determine the amount of water deficit and projects to meet them, Dr. Haddadin said.

The participants also agreed on the establishment of a water data bank to provide the concerned parties with information related to water and approval of a study financed by Norway concerning laws governing management of water resources, he said.

The working group agreed to a programme for training personnel from the Middle East region on water sector issues to be carried out in France, Austria, Germany and the United States.

APEC summit clinches 21st century free trade deal

BOGOR, Indonesia (Agencies) — Leaders of the Asia-Pacific region on Tuesday agreed to create the world's biggest free trade area by the year 2020.

At a five-and-a-half hour summit in the colonial retreat of Bogor, 60 kilometres from Jakarta, members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum said their economies — responsible for half the globe's commerce — would show the world the way to a free trade era.

"Our goal is an ambitious one. But we are determined to demonstrate APEC's leadership in fostering further global trade and investment liberalisation," their Bogor declaration said.

"It will start our concerted liberalisation process from the very date of this statement."

APEC comprises Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indone-

sia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and the United States.

"This agreement is good news for the countries of this region and especially good news for the United States and its workers," U.S. President Bill Clinton told a news conference.

U.S. products and services will become more competitive abroad as a result of freer trade arrangements in Asia, Mr. Clinton said at the conclusion of the meeting.

The timetable to end trade barriers among 18 Pacific Rim nations calls for only the biggest industrial economies to drop trade barriers by 2010. Most of the rest of the region would get another 10 years, until 2020.

Mr. Clinton touted the accord as a natural outgrowth of the initial Asia-Pacific Rim summit he organised a year

ago in Seattle, and said that the leaders would now work on a "detailed action agenda" for a follow-through summit next year in Osaka, Japan.

He hailed the meeting as "historic" but said the greater challenge is in making the agreement workable. "If we adopt a blueprint (for lowering trade barriers), that is a very good sign."

Most APEC leaders hailed the Bogor declaration as a watershed for the Asia-Pacific, but Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad alone frostily refused his blessing.

The declaration was even welcomed as "positive" by Chinese President Jiang Zemin, who had previously rejected the idea of a timetable, saying it could dangerously expose the vulnerable economies of developing countries to the full force of

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq agrees to give missing data

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq has promised to give United Nations arms inspectors the data they need to complete their information on Baghdad's past weapons programmes, a senior U.N. official said Tuesday.

Charles Duelfer, deputy executive chairman of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) on Iraq, said the promise was made by General Amer Rasheed, head of Iraq's Military Industrialisation Commission.

The promised improved efforts in this direction ... to apply more vigour in efforts," Mr. Duelfer told Reuters.

Mr. Duelfer arrived in Baghdad on Monday to press Iraq over what he described as "significant gaps" in information on past weapons programmes, particularly biological warfare.

He met Gen. Rasheed on Monday night and they expect to talk again before he left Baghdad on Thursday.

"It was a good meeting."

We had an honest exchange of the technical issues and their importance," Mr. Duelfer said.

Mr. Duelfer's mission is to account for and dismantle Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, including its nuclear, chemical and biological arsenal, under the terms of the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire.

Baghdad last Thursday recognised Kuwait, which it invaded in 1990, as an independent state, another key U.N. demand.

But in New York on Monday night, the U.N. Security Council voted to maintain sanctions, which bar the export of Iraqi oil (see page 2).

Mr. Duelfer said Iraq's supplying of missing data would help UNSCOM have a complete picture of past programmes.

Otherwise "it will delay a favourable report by the commission to the Security Council," he said.

The U.N.'s long-term monitoring programme, which is now provisionally

operational, has not yet covered the biological area, he said.

Iraq must supply UNSCOM with a complete inventory of its microbiology-related facilities to enable experts to verify that Baghdad will not experiment with warfare purposes again, Mr. Duelfer said.

"We have little substantiation to verify the programme," he said.

Iraq meanwhile accused the United States and Britain of trying to carve it up and control its oil wealth by prolonging crippling economic sanctions.

"Both countries want to see Iraq dismembered," the official Baghdad Observer said in an article after the U.N. Security Council in New York decided to renew sanctions.

The two want Iraq to "abandon its sovereignty and territorial integrity and eventually let the American and British colonise Iraq and con-

trol its oil wealth," said the Information Ministry newspaper. The 15-member council met in informal session after Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz handed over documents on Iraq's official recognition of Kuwait to Madeleine Albright, the council's current president.

The council, which reviews the sanctions every two months, urged Baghdad to meet the demands of the U.N. weapons disarmament commission, free Kuwaiti prisoners of war, return Kuwaiti assets and satisfy U.N. demands on human rights.

Mr. Aziz expressed hope that the council would act "in a positive manner to this important step on the side of Iraq," arguing that his government had now fulfilled the conditions for lifting the sanctions regime.

The question of Iraq's recognition of Kuwait was taken

(Continued on page 2)

Israel hands over tourism to PNA

Palestinians celebrate 6th year of independence declaration

BETHLEHEM, Occupied West Bank (Agencies) — Palestinians celebrated the sixth anniversary of their declaration of independence on Tuesday, taking control of tourism in the West Bank at a ceremony in the birthplace of Jesus.

The Bethlehem ceremony and a similar event in the town of Ramallah — during which Israel handed over authority in social welfare to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) — gave the Gaza-based Palestinian National Authority (PNA) a new foothold in the West Bank.

Yet Palestinians had several reasons to celebrate.

Six years ago on Tuesday the Palestine National Council, meeting in Algiers, declared an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. This year the

PNA declared its Palestine independence day.

"What was once a dream has today become a reality. We are in our homeland," PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, head of the PNA, told a crowd of 7,000 celebrants in the Gaza Strip handed over by Israel in May.

He appealed to Islamic groups opposed to his 1993 peace deal with Israel, urging them to unite in building a homeland.

Mr. Arafat said Islamic militants were using poverty to gain influence and warned that the peace process could collapse if donor nations do not make good on aid pledges.

Mr. Arafat said that less than \$40 million, only six per cent of the funds, have come

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Rabin visits settlers to reassure them

GAZA (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Tuesday visited the scene of a Palestinian suicide bombing last week and assured Israelis in the Gaza Strip that their settlements would stay put.

"No settlements will be dismantled during the interim phase" of Palestinian self-rule, ahead of negotiations on a final settlement, he said during a tour of army units protecting the Jewish communities on the autonomous strip.

Mr. Rabin visited the Gush Katif block of settlements and the army post near the Netzarim settlement, where a suicide bomber killed himself along with three Israeli soldiers last Friday.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was not doing enough to prevent attacks by opponents of the autonomy deal with Israel, he told reporters, calling for "more serious efforts to combat terrorism."

A settlers' leader welcomed Mr. Rabin's visit,

saying it was the first time the prime minister had come to meet the Jews living in Gaza since Palestinian self-rule was launched in May.

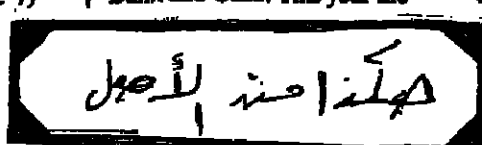
"He proposed solutions for our security and I hope he will not give way to extreme left-wing ministers who want us to leave," said Zvi Hendel, head of the council of Gaza settlements.

Mr. Rabin, who also serves as defence minister, was accompanied on the Gaza visit by the army's chief-of-staff, General Ehud Barak, and the new commander for the region, General Shaul Mofaz.

The army earlier blocked off one of the main roads in the autonomous territory to allow settlers to pray at the scene of the bombing carried out by a member of Islamic Jihad, Palestinian sources said.

Hundreds of Palestinian drivers were stuck when the army blocked off the road

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Home News

Boycott of Israel to continue
The Arab League has decided to continue its boycott of Israel until Israel hands back occupied territories and complies with the relevant resolutions of the Arab League and the United Nations. The Arab League also decided to continue its boycott of Israel until Israel hands back occupied territories and complies with the relevant resolutions of the Arab League and the United Nations.

Police search for women in major fraud case

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times
AMMAN — Irbid police are searching for two women in their mid-forties, who on Tuesday defrauded a 45-year-old woman and her daughter of \$33,500, JD70 and jewellery worth more than JD2,500, according to Public Security Department (PSD) reports.

The report said that the victim, who was not identified, told police that two months ago, two women approached her home in Al Janoubi suburb in Irbid and called her 20-year-old daughter by name. The two women then told the daughter that they knew her name because they possessed supernatural powers, the report said.

The report said that the girl, who was also not identified, invited the two women into her house. The two women said to have performed magical acts, the report said.

According to the report, the two women claimed that they were from Morocco. One of them identified herself as "Um Mohammad," and the other one as "Fatimah."

The mother said that her daughter suggested that these two women cure her younger sister who was deaf and mute. The mother agreed, the report said.

The two women demanded JD1,000 and some jewellery from the victims in order to cure the youngster, and told the family that they will return the money the next day.

The report said that the two women did return the money and jewellery the next day and asked the victims for

\$33,500 and more jewellery in order for the magic to work.

The two women told them that they would return the money after one week; but they never returned, the report said.

A PSD official told the Jordan Times Tuesday evening that the two women were still at large, but police have good descriptions of both.

"This is the first time we experience such an incident in that area, yet, we have good descriptions of both women, and hopefully we will arrest them soon," the official said.

He called on citizens to take extra precautions when dealing with people who claim that there are witch doctors, healers or claim they have supernatural powers.

Also in Irbid on Tuesday, police questioned a doctor who treated an 11-year-old boy after he was bitten by a scorpion, in Abu Obaidah town. The boy died two days later, police reports said.

According to the report, the victim's father told police that on Nov. 13, his son, Mikhled Ahmad, was bitten by a scorpion. He said that he took his son to a doctor in town for treatment.

According to Mr. Ahmad, Mikhled was listed in good condition and left the doctor's clinic. The next day, the father said, his son died shortly after the glucose bag that was given to him by the same doctor had emptied.

The report said that Mikhled's body was transferred to Al Bashir Hospital for an autopsy. It did not release the name of the doctor and did not say if the doctor was apprehended.

Shmeisani pedestrian tunnel to formally open today
By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — As part of celebrations marking His Majesty King Hussein's birthday, a ceremony is to be held today to formally inaugurate the tunnel at the Housing Bank Centre Shmeisani.

The 30-metre-long tunnel cost the municipality JD 75,000, of which the Housing Bank donated JD 50,000.

Work on the construction of the tunnel started at the beginning of October and took less than a month to complete, said a municipality official, adding that this is the fifth pedestrian or traffic tunnel to be built by the Amman Municipality.

He told the Jordan Times that the eight-metre-wide and three-metre-high tunnel was essential at the busy commercial area where numerous road accidents had occurred.



Her Majesty Queen Noor on Tuesday presents gifts to participants of a camp for handicapped children (photo by Crystal)

Queen inaugurates children's camp

AMMAN (J.T.) — On the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's birthday, Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday inaugurated the Jordan Volunteers Team eleventh Jordanian national camp for handicapped children, a Royal Court statement said.

Held in Aqaba and supervised by 50 volunteers, the camp provides recreation for mentally handicapped children from throughout Jordan, said the statement.

Established in 1992 by a group of University of Jordan graduates, the Jordan Volunteers Team, said the statement, works to provide services for charitable centres and societies outside Amman by holding educational and recreational camps for handicapped children.

The team also educates rural societies to the needs of handicapped children and holds teacher training workshops in special education for centres in underprivileged areas of the Kingdom, it said.

Following a tour of the camp, the statement said, Queen Noor met the participating children and distributed gifts to them. The children performed folkloric dances to celebrate the King's birthday.

Queen Noor, accompanied by Princess Wijdan Ali, was received by Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, Sharifa Hind Nasser, Prince Firas Ra'ad, the team's supervisor, Sharifa Nofa Bint Nasser, the team's president, and other officials.



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Development Agency Director General Tuesday receives Canadian International Norman Cook at her office (Petra photo)

QAF, CIDA discuss cooperation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Tuesday met at her office with Norman Cook, director general of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and briefed him on the general programmes of the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF).

The Princess, who is honorary chairperson of QAF's Board of Trustees, also briefed Dr. Cook on Jordan's preparations for the Fourth

World Conference on Women scheduled for next year in Beijing.

According to QAF officials, CIDA plans to organise and help ensure cooperation between Canada's non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and those in the Middle East region, particularly in Jordan.

The Princess also discussed the objectives of the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW) and its programmes to enable

women to contribute to the socio-economic development in the country.

Princess Basma voiced hope that CIDA and QAF would step up their bilateral cooperation and she expressed appreciation of the Canadian government's assistance to Jordan's non-governmental organisations.

For his part, Dr. Cook said he was impressed with QAF activities, particularly those directed to benefit women in the rural regions.

Germany, Jordan review prospects of agricultural sector development
AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Agriculture Mansour Ben Tarif Tuesday received a chief executive of the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), H.P. Merz, who is currently on a five-day visit to Jordan.

Mr. Ben Tarif and Dr. Merz discussed scopes of cooperation between Jordan and Germany and means of enhancing ties between the Kingdom and GTZ.

The minister briefed Dr. Merz on challenges facing the region as a result of recent developments, which, he said, require more attention to the agricultural sector with the aim of developing the Jordanian economy.

He said Jordan was about to finalise new agricultural policies that take into consideration the new developments.

In addition, he lauded efforts exerted by the German agency to support the agricultural sector in the Kingdom.

The two sides stressed at the meeting the importance of promoting cooperation and conducting studies on means of improving the status of farmers.

Dr. Merz arrived in Amman Saturday to participate in a roundtable conference on the human dimensions of the Middle East peace process.

Police search for women in major fraud case

By Rana Hussein

Special to the Jordan Times

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HCST urges better use of dry, semi-arid areas
MAFRAQ (Petra) — The head of the agriculture sector of the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST), Abdul Rahman Fatafah Tuesday said that desert areas, which constitute 83.3 per cent of Jordan's total area, are full of resources that can meet the requirements and demands of the development process if properly used.

In an address at the opening of a three-day workshop on the application of biotechnology in farming, Dr. Fatafah said the HCST was prompted to establish a comprehensive development and research programme to be carried out at several stages in the Jordanian desert upon directives by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, who is the HCST president.

Dr. Fatafah said that of the most important problems facing development in dry and semi-arid areas in the world is the increased demand for food, adding that the agricultural sector has a key role in achieving food security, which in turn constitutes the core of the agricultural policies and a means to economic independence.

He said the Jordanian desert development programme aims to achieve a lasting environmental development scheme and to contribute to improving the living conditions of residents in desert areas.

Also, to achieve these objectives, according to Dr. Fatafah, Prince Hassan has called in August, at the second Jordanian science

week, for the establishment of a centre specialised in desertification at Al al Bayt University to work in coordination with HCST's programme to fight the problem.

Dr. Fatafah said increasing agricultural production requires either horizontal or vertical expansion in production, noting that both ways require the utilisation of modern technologies.

Also utilising agricultural bio-technology applications will actively contribute to developing dry areas in Jordan after they were excluded from development plans for a long period, he said, adding that the use of bio-technology had led to finding plants resistant to the harsh conditions in the desert, such as the scarcity of water and water salinity.

In addition, genetic engineering has opened new doors for overcoming genetic problems, and its use can increase agricultural production, he said at the opening session to the workshop in which 30 researchers representing 13 Arab and foreign countries and participating.

These came from Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Syria, Sudan, Iraq, Canada, Cyprus, Morocco, Egypt, India and the U.S. Other researchers at the workshop represent the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), the Islamic Network for Genetic Engineering and Bio-technology and the Arab Agricultural Development Organisation.

IAF shura council elects new head
AMMAN (J.T.) — The Shura Council of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) elected Adnan Al Majali as shura council chairman to succeed Abdul Majid Thumebat who resigned the post after being elected as general observer of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, according to an IAF council statement Tuesday.

Mr. Majali was an IAF candidate in the 1993 parliamentary election in the Karak district, but failed to

Shmeisani pedestrian tunnel to formally open today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As part of celebrations marking His Majesty King Hussein's birthday, a ceremony is to be held today to formally inaugurate the tunnel at the Housing Bank Centre Shmeisani.

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He told the Jordan Times that the eight-metre-wide and three-metre-high tunnel was essential at the busy commercial area where numerous road accidents had occurred.

Housing Bank Board chairman Zuheir Khouri will formally open the tunnel at a ceremony to be attended by senior municipality officials, said the representative.

Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi voiced the municipality's appreciation to the Housing Bank for its donation, saying that the tunnel, would facilitate pedestrians at this traffic-congested area of Amman.

Over the span of two years, Amman Municipality dug two tunnels in the area of the University of Jordan, another at the Independence Road and one at Yadoudah to the south — all within the Greater Amman region in order to ensure safe pedestrian crossing on heavily congested

roads, according to the official.

Other future tunnels, he said, include a JD 80,000 passageway in a congested area of Zarqa which is expected to be completed in 10 days. The 31-metre-long pedestrian tunnel, he added, was a gift from the Amman Municipality to Zarqa residents.

Dr. Abbadi said the municipality was studying opening a tunnel in the Sweifeh region, connecting it with the Queen Alia Airport highway.

He said the tunnel, which is to be used by vehicles, will save motorists to trouble of having to drive to the Seventh Circle junction enroute to the airport.

The planned tunnel, he added, was expected to cost JD 120,000 to JD 140,000.

Visiting Turkish parliamentarian predicts advanced bilateral ties
AMMAN (Petra) — Visiting Turkish parliamentarian Bulent Ecevit Tuesday said that Turkish businesspersons would soon be coming to Jordan to seek joint investment projects with the Jordanian business community.

Noting that Turkish-Jordanian ties have always been strong, Mr. Ecevit said the Turkish government was seeking to advance bilateral relations in all fields especially as Jordan and Turkey are linked by historic, geographic and cultural ties. Mr. Ecevit, who was on a visit to Jordan to take part in the roundtable conference on the human dimensions of Middle East

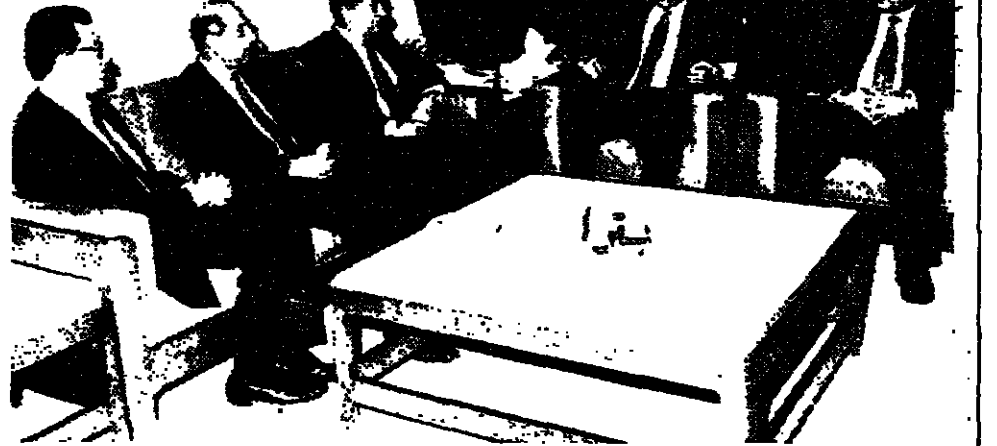
peace, said he believed that Jordan would enjoy further political stability and a stronger economy in the wake of the peace treaty, which, he said, augurs well for all the nations of the Middle East region.

The Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, Mr. Ecevit said, was an essential step for the establishment of security and stability, paving the way for the region's prosperity.

Referring to the recent visit to the Palestinian self-rule areas by Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, Mr. Ecevit said that it reaffirms Turkey's intent to bolster its ties with the Arab World in general, and Jordan and Palestine in particular.

He said Turkey was deeply interested in backing economic development projects in the self-rule areas.

Asked to comment on the Republican party's success in the elections for the United States Congress and its impact on future U.S. relations with the countries of the region, Mr. Ecevit said it was premature to predict the party's policies. But he expressed hope that the Republicans would help end the U.N. embargo on the Iraqi people and open the door for Iraq's return to the international community.



PRESS MATTERS: Lower House of Parliament Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour Tuesday reviews with President of the Jordan Press Association Qudus (third left) and JPA's board members the role of the nation press in advancing the causes of the nation and press-related issues. Mr. Srour stressed the need for objective and accurate press coverage of events, and lauded the relation between the legislative power and the press. Mr. Qudus congratulated Mr. Srour on his election as the speaker of the House, and voiced the JPA's interest in advancing cooperation with Parliament. The JPA chief reviewed several press concerns including the Press and Publications Law and the JPA law (Petra photo)

Save water every drop counts...

Relations sour as Taiwan shells China by mistake

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan said Tuesday it had accidentally shelled its rival China, drawing harsh condemnation from Beijing and driving relations to a new low.

China's official Xinhua News Agency said that Taiwanese troops stationed on Lesser Quemoy, an island less than two kilometres off the mainland, fired at least a dozen shells into a suburb of Xiamen City.

Without confirming the number of shells fired, Taiwan's Defence Ministry acknowledged that a bombardment had taken place and expressed deep regret for its "unfortunate" mistake.

"We express deep regret over this mistaken incident, which had no inimical intent," said a statement from the Quomoy Defence Command, a unit subordinate to the ministry.

The anti-aircraft shells were supposed to explode in mid-air but failed to do so and crashed onto the main-

land, the statement explained.

Four people, two of whom were seriously injured, were receiving emergency medical treatment, Xinhua quoted Xiamen municipal officials as saying.

As Taiwan expressed its sorrow Beijing issued a strong condemnation of the island, still ruled by the Nationalists who fled there after losing the civil war against the Communists in 1949.

"We express grave concern over the incident," Xinhua quoted a spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office under the State Council (cabinet) as saying.

The bombardment was an evil act and "a vicious incident that sabotaged the peaceful atmosphere across the Taiwan Straits," the spokesman added.

He demanded Taipei launch an immediate investigation, make public the facts and severely punish

those responsible.

Both China and Taiwan claim sovereignty over all China and Beijing has not renounced the use of force to recover the island.

Political tensions eased in the late 1980s and commercial contacts have boomed. But the Taiwan Straits still bristle with weapons and military tensions remain dangerously high.

Taiwan remains serious about defending itself against any Communist attack. Its Defence Ministry last week proposed a record budget for weapons spending.

Analysts in Taiwan were surprised at the strength of China's condemnation.

"This shows that hostilities remain very deep and cannot be eased in the near term," said professor and military expert Chi Mao-Chi at the National Central University.

"The most worrying factor is that in the future such an accident could develop into conflict."

But an official at the Mainland Affairs Council, which formulates Taiwan's China policy, played down the likely effect of the bombardment.

"This is an isolated incident and it will not affect relations across the straits," said Director of Information William Li.

Taiwan's Defence Minister Sun Chen said a thorough investigation had been launched. The Defence Ministry statement said compensation would be paid to the victims but did not say how much.

The last serious bombardment of China by Taiwan was during a cross-strait battle in 1958. There have been no reports of exchanges of fire since the 1970s.

In recent years, Nationalist troops have opened fire on illegal immigrants from China trying to slip past garisons on Nationalist-held islands as they tried to reach Taiwan aboard fishing boats, causing some casualties.

U.S. Republicans pledge 7-day workweeks to get contract done

WASHINGTON (AP) — With their leader pledging a "very profound change in government" Republicans said Monday they would hold the house in session seven days a week if necessary next year to vote on a 100-day agenda ranging from tax cuts to welfare reform.

"This is time to be open to dramatic, bold changes," speaker-to-be Newt Gingrich told a crowded news conference at which he was flanked by Rep. Richard Armey of Texas, introduced as the next majority leader, and the leaders of a Republican transition team.

Mr. Gingrich later walked to the other side of the Capitol to meet Senate Republican leader Bob Dole. On an unseasonably warm day, the two men sat on an outside terrace discussing their plans for the 104th congress. "It's a great opportunity," Sen. Dole said later of the Republican majorities in both houses.

He said he expected close cooperation between the houses. "If he has a bill and we have a bill, hopefully they will be the same," Sen. Dole said. "We need to coordinate whenever we can. That doesn't mean we are never going to disagree."

Earlier, Mr. Armey said Republicans would be hard-pressed to gain the two-thirds majority needed for a constitutional amendment setting term limits for lawmakers and to balance the budget. But he predicted most of the "contract with America" would pass.

House officials stressed that almost nothing would be immune from review as they take control after a 40-year Democratic majority.

There was no clearer signal of the House's new order than the news conference at which Mr. Gingrich, Mr. Armey and others spoke. It was carried live on CNN and attended by an overflow crowd of reporters.

Mr. Gingrich and Mr. Armey said the "contract with America" signed by more than 300 House candidates would be pushed to a vote within 100 days, as promised. The proposals include welfare reform; a crime bill; a series of tax cuts, including a reduction on capital gains and relief for families and certain senior citizens; a



House Speaker-in-waiting Newt Gingrich, R-GA (left) is followed by reporters after a press conference on Capitol Hill. Mr. Gingrich said his Republican leadership will act quickly on American's request to take the lead in Washington (AP photo)

balanced budget amendment, term limits and other measures.

"We will complete the contract within 100 days," Mr. Armey said. "If that means working seven days a week, we'll work seven days. If that means working 20 hours a day, we'll work 20 hours a day."

The new Republican majority, Mr. Gingrich said, was "determined to get a very profound change in government for the American people. In a slap at the Clinton administration, he said Republicans would attempt to "truly lead."

He said Democrats would have a greater opportunity to participate than Republicans have had in the past, and Mr. Armey shrugged off a question of whether the Republicans would be out for revenge, saying, "it's not an honourable thing to do."

Republicans have pledged to bring bills to the floor under rules that permit virtually unlimited amendments. Democrats frequently resorted to a procedure that sharply limited amendments.

Mr. Armey's ascension to majority leader would mean

southerners would hold the two top positions in the new Republican leadership lineup. Elected last week to a sixth term from the suburban Dallas area, the 54-year-old Armey won a leadership position two years ago by appealing to a large crop of freshmen and pledging to use confrontation where necessary as a legislative tactic. He was intimately involved in conceiving and drafting the "contract with America."

Republicans expected to push through a rules change on the opening day of the session, Jan. 4, reducing the size of committee staffs by one-third. Unlike the customary practice of then taking a three-week break to await the president's budget, aides said, the House would remain in session so committees could begin work on the rest of the legislation, sending it to the floor for an early vote.

Meanwhile, their leadership decapitated by the voters and through retirement, Democrats in Congress are trying to decide who will head their tattered forces next year.

Chinese stop going to movies, prefer karaoke

BEIJING (R) — Fewer Chinese are going to the cinema, finding more entertainment in karaoke parlours and at video halls, the official media said. "As an actor I feel that this is a terrible pity," China's top actress, Gong Li, star of such internationally acclaimed hits as Farewell My Concubine and To Live, said in an interview carried by the Hubei Daily News. Cinema ticket sales in China have plunged from 29.3 billion in 1979 to just 9.5 billion last year and sales are now falling at the rate of one billion a year, the Xinhua News Agency said. Audiences were seeking entertainment in new karaoke lounges or watching videos in special halls, Gong Li was quoted as saying. Most popular videos are violent action films or illegal pornographic movies that can be watched in comfortable semi-private rooms holding between 20 and 50 people, one local film critic said. "People don't want to go to the movies and sit on uncomfortable wooden seats in a smelly cinema," she said. Last year was among the worst for the Chinese film industry, with the number of films plummeting by 50 per cent and cinema incomes dropping 35 per cent, Xinhua said. The income from film releases was down by 40 per cent, it said, adding that there was little prospect for improvement. China needs to produce more high quality films and consider the tastes of audiences and the demands of the market if it is to revitalise the industry, Xinhua quoted film critic Li Shaobai as saying.

New York cops put brakes on most-wanted driver

NEW YORK (AP) — The traffic violation — an illegal U-turn — was routine stuff, but when police pulled over Leroy Linen, they soon discovered he was no ordinary motorist. It took nearly two hours to print out his list of traffic violations, which had resulted in 633 license suspensions in the last five years. He was the city's most-wanted driver. New York City's No. 1 scofflaw was charged with aggravated unlicensed operation of a vehicle and driving without a license. The 40-year-old, scrap-metal dealer was jailed without bail. After a series of fatal accidents involving unlicensed drivers, state lawmakers last year made it a felony to drive with 10 or more suspensions. In one accident last May, Abraham Meyers, 55, a drunken driver with 22 license suspensions, killed a mother and her two daughters as the family tried to cross the street after a party in Queens, authorities say. Since then, the police department has kept a list of drivers with 100 or more suspensions, topped by Linen's. Officers also are under orders to make more computer checks on drivers stopped for traffic offences.

Ticket sales boom as lottery fever hits U.K.

LONDON (R) — Gambling fever gripped Britain as Britons hoping to become instant millionaires snapped up £7 million (\$11.14 million) worth of tickets in the first 12 hours of the country's new lottery. "Since the National Lottery went live the response from public and retailers alike has been outstanding," David Rigg of the organisers Camelot said. Mr. Rigg told a news conference that by mid-afternoon total sales had reached £5 million (\$8 million). In an update later he said sales at seven p.m. (1900 GMT) had topped £7 million — about £6.2 million (\$9.9 million) for this Saturday's draw and the rest in advance purchases by players wanting to use the same numbers in future draws. Britain joined the rest of Europe with its own national lottery when Prime Minister John Major purchased the first ticket for the £2 million (\$3.2 million) weekly prize.

Hot dogs mean heavy fines in Zimbabwe

HARARE (R) — Dog owners in Zimbabwe's Bulawayo city risk a heavy fine if they allow their bitches to roam free and attract amorous males. The city council introduced fines of £19 for flouting a new rule aimed at improving order and health standards.

Nepal holds snap general polls

KATHMANDU (R) — Nepal voted Tuesday in its second general election since protests ended absolute monarchy in 1990, amid anxieties that no clear majority would emerge to guide the picturesque Himalayan kingdom out of poverty.

About 100,000 members of the security forces fanned out across the nation and the 35,000-man army was put on alert.

There were no reports of violence as men and women formed separate queues in sunny Kathmandu, waiting quietly to stamp ballots marked only with symbols that included a tree, the sun,

a plough, a drum and a hammer and sickle.

More than 1,250 election observers, including 130 foreigners from 28 countries, were posted in 205 constituencies spread from southern plains to the world's highest peaks, including the tallest, Mount Everest.

The border with India was sealed off to prevent any foreign tampering with the polls, the Election Commission said.

Nepal, squeezed between the world's two most populous nations India and China, is one of the world's 10 poorest countries with an average annual income of

\$180 a head. Eighty per cent of its development spending comes from foreign aid.

The polls were not expected to knock Nepal off the neutral foreign policy course it has long pursued.

In 1991 the centrist Nepali Congress Party won the nation's first free election in 31 years after King Birendra was forced by pro-democracy protests to relinquish almost all his power.

But factional in-fighting and allegations of corruption plagued the party, forcing Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala to call snap parliamentary polls 18 months ahead of schedule.

Japan, U.S. hold longest military exercise

NORTHERN HOKKAIDO, Japan (R) — Japanese and U.S. troops Tuesday started the second week of mock ground, sea and air battles around snowblown northern Japan in their longest-ever joint military exercise.

Exercise Keen Edge brought together about 26,000 troops from all branches of the two militaries that 50 years ago were waging all-out war against each other in the Pacific.

The mission was to practice defending Japan together against a "generic threat," striving for synergy between the two forces in an age of tight defence budgets.

"When you add one American unit and one Japanese unit, you get three," said U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Perry Mize, assistant director of the field exercise.

Keen Edge began on Nov. 8 with wargames to train commanders in complex manoeuvres involving U.S. and Japanese fighter, tanker and transport planes.

From last Saturday to this Friday, the skies over northern and central Japan will be filled with planes from U.S. bases as far away as South Carolina and their Japanese Self-Defence Force counterparts from Hokkaido.

Directing the air traffic requires the precision of "taking off out of Washington D.C. and making a red light traffic signal in St. Louis at a set time," said Col. Mize.

Typical operations had mixed Japanese and U.S. teams of four to eight planes take off from Misawa Air Base, about 450 kilometres north of Tokyo.

While patrolling Japan's airspace, the team would be attacked by another joint squadron of "bad guys," with the point and means of attack known only by commanders on the ground.

Lessons drawn from the clash were then analysed by both sides to make sure that "if we have to do it for real, we will be able to do it," said Mark Rutter, a U.S. Air Force pilot based in Alaska.

The United States maintains about 44,000 troops at 94 installations throughout Japan.

MSF leaves terror Rwanda camps

NAIROBI (R) — A world-renowned medical aid agency evacuated its last staff from the Zairean town of Bukavu Tuesday to escape a reign of terror in Rwandan refugee camps.

Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF-Doctors Without Borders) spokeswoman Samantha Bolton said the last three French staff were leaving Bukavu Tuesday. Sixteen left the town Monday.

The last three included chief of mission Sylvie Gries. The aid workers were heading first to the Rwandan capital of Kigali before flying to Nairobi, Kenya, for debriefing.

MSF halted operations in camps for an estimated 250,000 refugees around Bukavu Monday, saying killers linked to the ousted Rwandan government held sway and insecurity was increasing.

MSF threatened to withdraw all its workers from Zaire unless the international community sent a force to secure the camps where it said staff had observed military training by Rwandans.

"In Bukavu the situation has deteriorated to such an

extent that it is now ethically impossible for Medecins Sans Frontieres to continue aiding and abetting the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide.

"Members of the former Rwandan authorities, military and militias exert total control over tens of thousands of civilians in the camps in Bukavu," MSF said in a statement Monday.

The head of MSF-France, Xavier Emmanuelli, said earlier in an interview in Tokyo with the Asahi Shimbun newspaper that the situation in the Rwanda-Zaire refugee camp area was becoming more confused and desperate every day.

"The leaders of the refugees are those who carried out massacres and they are trying to recapture power," he said.

"Medical services under these circumstances are no longer useful," he added.

MSF said its workers had witnessed the installation of a camp policing system barring police or a rapid deployment force to tighten security in the camps.

They also saw intimidation, arrests and assassinations of people who wanted

to return to Rwanda, who were suspected to be opposed to the regime in the camps or who were members of Rwanda's Tutsi minority, the statement added.

More than a million Rwandans, mostly members of the Hutu majority, fled to Zaire in July after a three-month civil war.

Many feared revenge for the massacre of up to a million people, mostly Tutsis, by Hutu soldiers and death squads. The killers and members of the Hutu-led government fled to Zaire after Tutsi-dominated rebels won the civil war in Rwanda.

MSF said it would stop all operations in the camps unless Hutu leaders, former soldiers and militiamen were separated from the main body of refugees and said its staff had received death threats.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali said last week he would ask the Security Council to consider sending police or a rapid deployment force to tighten security in the camps.

The move followed a threat by 16 aid agencies to pull out.

Quake, tidal wave kill 45 in Philippines

CALAPAN, Philippines (R) — An earthquake followed by huge waves ravaged the central Philippines island of Mindoro Tuesday, killing at least 45 people and demolishing hundreds of houses, officials said.

More than 130 people were injured when the quake struck before dawn, triggering panic, plunging the island into darkness and splitting open the base of a mountain in the tourist resort of Puerto Galera.

"The earthquake was accompanied by a roar. Then the waves came, as high as 10 to 15 metres, the furniture in my house was dancing and then fell over," Oriental Mindoro provincial Governor Rod Valencia said by telephone.

"People ran out to the streets and many of them were crying," Mr. Valencia said 44 people died in Oriental Mindoro, 39 of them in the provincial capital of Calapan and in the nearby town of Baco, which were nearest the quake's epicentre. Calapan has a population of 100,000.

One person died in San Jose in Occidental Mindoro, the other half of the two-province island, 140 kilometres south of the Philippines capital, Manila. The island has a population of one

million.

Government seismologists measured the quake at 6.7 on the Richter Scale but the U.S. Earthquake Centre in Golden, Colorado measured it at 7.1.

"The quake lasted so long I thought it would not end," Calapan resident Oscar Asturias said.

"When it subsided, people ran to the streets and then we heard an even bigger roar. It was the waves and people panicked. They just ran for their lives."

The quake and the waves, which struck shortly after 3 a.m. (1900 GMT Monday), destroyed about 500 houses, knocked out power over wide areas of the island, wrecked the water supply system, damaged 18 bridges and crushed several moored fishing boats.

Seismologists said the tremor was felt for about 15 seconds but instruments continued to record its rumblings for more than 10 minutes before it subsided.

In Manila, many people rushed from their homes after being awakened by the quake.

Five hours after the quake struck, seismologists have recorded more than 600 aftershocks.

President Fidel Ramos, attending an 18-nation sum-

mit meeting of the Asia Pacific Cooperation Forum in Indonesia, ordered Misdro placed under a state of calamity, enabling the government to release emergency funds.

Much of the destruction and death was inflicted by the waves, which carried off houses and drowned their occupants, Mr. Valencia said.

He said only about 20 per cent of the casualties were due to the quake. These were people hit by falling objects or crushed when their houses collapsed.

Food vendor Herminia Bocanegra, 61, was sleeping in her sidewalk stall in the port of Batangas on the main island of Luzon when she felt the street "swaying like a baby's cradle."

"When I looked out, the sea had disappeared. Then the wind rose and the waves came," she said.

The waves hurled away six fishing boats anchored at the pier, splitting one of them in two, and tossed overboard dozens of cattle they were carrying.

Twenty-one dead cows bobbed in the sea for hours until residents pulled them in to be taken to the slaughterhouse and sold in the public market.

Batangas is about 40 kilometres north of Calapan.



Mandela meets Miss World contestants

PRETORIA (AP) — South African President Nelson Mandela met 87 beauty queens gathered in South Africa for the Miss World contest to be held Saturday in Sun City in the northeast of the country. Dozens of cameras were present at Union Buildings in Pretoria, where the presidency is housed, to capture a smiling Mandela, wearing a bottle-green silk shirt, shaking the hand of each contestant. He went a little further with the local representative in the contest Miss South Africa, Basetsane Julia Makgole, clasping her in his arms. "I knew him from television and the

newspapers and I never dreamed I would shake his hand," said Shomolu Sushida, Miss Japan. But she could not talk to him as she speaks only Japanese. "It is a privilege, it is a great day for me," said Radiah Ladine, Miss France, who comes from French Guiana. Lara Badawi, Miss Lebanon, declared herself to be "very happy." "It is the first time I have shaken a president's hand," she said, adding that she had never had the chance to shake that of her own President Elias Hrawi. Mr. Mandela will be at the contest, which is being held in Sun City for the third year running (AP photo)

France, Britain discuss Africa peacekeeping force

PARIS (R) — France and Britain, the two main former colonial powers in Africa, are discussing a joint initiative to help African nations form their own peacekeeping force, officials from both countries said.

The project, which French and British leaders will discuss at their annual summit Friday in the French town of Chartres, would involve training, equipping and possibly providing logistical support for an all-African military force.

The need for an African force was highlighted by the slow international response to ethnic massacres in Rwanda this year, as well as the long-running civil wars in Liberia and Somalia.

It took the United Nations more than two months to put together a peacekeeping force for Rwanda, and then

only after France had taken unilateral action to create a safe haven for refugees in the landlocked central African state.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) agreed in principle to create such a force but progress has been slow.

France, increasingly reluctant to act as Africa's gendarme, made the issue top of the agenda at an annual summit with its African allies in Biarritz last week.

"What happened in Rwanda has taught us that something must be done. The question is whether we will do it under the United Nations or the OAU," Gabonese President Omar Bongo said after the Franco-African summit.

While most African states backed the idea, they looked to Paris and its European

allies for cash and military support.

"There is plenty of interest in principle. The problem will be who pays," a French official said.

He said the Western European Union, the European Union's designated defence arm, could provide transport and logistical support if requested by African states.

Belgium, another WEU member which has intervened several times to restore order in its former African colonies, has complained that its military is overstretched and is likely to back an African force.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said in a speech last month that France and Britain could help "enhance Africa's capacity and readiness in conflict prevention and peacekeeping."

A British official said Paris and London had compatible ideas and would present proposals to other European governments on how to train, equip and assist an African force.

Diplomats said many practical problems would have to be solved, including organising cooperation among African armies that speak different languages, avoiding arms supplied for peacekeeping being used for domestic repression and stocking equipment safely out of the hands of coup plotters and profiteers.

France has the biggest military contingent of any foreign country in Africa with 9,000 troops, based in six countries giving it a capability to project power and intervene rapidly with small, highly-trained units.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.

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Jordan Press Foundation,
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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Pretexts or real causes

IRAQ'S LATEST bid to lift sanctions imposed on it by the U.N. Security Council failed in spite of its official recognition of Kuwait as called for by the Security Council. Security Council President, U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright's only comment in the wake of the Council's deliberations Monday to consider Baghdad's latest application to relax the sanctions was brief and to the point: "We met, reviewed the sanctions regime and decided to continue it without change."

As a matter of fact, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz did not expect an immediate ending of punitive measures against his country and said so in so many words on the eve of Monday's meeting. What Iraq expects, however, is the beginning of the process that would lead to lifting the oil embargo and other sanctions by the time the Council reviews this issue six months from now. This is essentially the scenario that Moscow is also working on as it continues its efforts to prepare the groundwork for rehabilitating Iraq into the international community. "I am counting on the U.S. to be able to contain its emotions and recognise one thing — in international affairs, people do not act in the same way forever," Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was quoted as saying in defence of his government's bid to temper Washington's adamant refusal to "budge on the sanctions. Mr. Kozyrev even went to the extent of comparing Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, who, in spite of his background as a guerrilla leader, has won the Nobel Peace prize.

Moscow's endorsement of Iraq comes in stark contrast with the stance of the U.S. and its principal allies and puts the two major powers on a head-on collision. Russian diplomatic efforts are clearly motivated and guided by objectives that run counter to those entertained by President Bill Clinton's administration. All indications point to Washington's insistence on changing the entire ruling regime in Iraq as a precondition for changing its stance on the sanctions. The human rights record by Iraq, which is admittedly anything but satisfactory, will surely be used by the White House as yet another critical factor that precludes any change of heart on the part of the Americans. The regime's continued oppression of its political enemies does not help matters much. There has been no real movement in the direction of pluralistic democracy in Iraq and respect for basic human rights is nowhere in sight. As long as this remains the case the West will continue to use it as a pretext to keep the sanctions. Baghdad, therefore, must avoid further excuses by its enemies to ostracise it by improving its human rights record.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily Tuesday drew the concerned government authorities' attention to the need for stemming the spiralling prices of basic commodities and dealing with corruption and acts of bribery in some of the public and private institutions. A kilogramme of dry onions costs half a dinar and a kilogramme of potatoes costs 750 fils, while the prices of other food stuffs continue to rise, making life more difficult for the limited income groups, said Tariq Masarweh. On the other hand, the writer drew attention to the fact that Arab investors are continually finding it difficult to invest in Jordan's businesses without having to pay sums of money to ensure that the procedures take their right course. He said this is corruption of which all citizens feel ashamed, and one that tends to hinder investments in the Kingdom's development projects.

HOSNI AYESH, a columnist in Al Ra'i, Tuesday addressed the results of the Oslo deal between Israel and the Palestinians one year on and said that Israel has been exploiting it to ensure its own selfish interests. Since the signing of the deal, he said, Israel has confiscated 67,000 dunams of Arab land in the West Bank, beefed up the existing Jewish settlements, built new roads to encircle Arab centres and consolidated its hold over the destiny of the Palestinian population. Citing the example of the Ibrahim Mosque, where the Israelis have installed a synagogue for the Jewish worshippers at the Islamic site, the writer said that the Israelis are pursuing policies that are incompatible with the spirit of the Oslo agreement and in flagrant violation of international law. He said that the Israelis continue to exploit the peace process with the Arabs to perpetuate their occupation of the Arab lands.

Tackling Egypt's Islamist insurgents

By Paul Witter

THE ISLAMIST insurgency which continues to trouble the Egyptian government owes its origin, in part, to the divide and rule tactics of President Anwar Sadat. For Sadat unwisely used the Islamists as a counter to the powerful secular leftists during the 1970s. He supported Islamic groups financially and cultivated an image of religious piety. Sadat's ultimate rejection of the Islamists' basic objectives and the signing of the Camp David peace accord with Israel led to his assassination in October 1981, by disgruntled Islamic militants who saw violence as the only way to reform a "rotten" and "atheist" state. Militant Islam, in the shape of the Jama'at Al Islamiya, was now to become Egypt's dominating political issue. Ever since, Egypt's vast bureaucracy and security services have laboured to put the Islamist genie back in the lamp.

Much has been written about the Islamist guerrillas and the likelihood of their overthrowing the Mubarak regime. The importance of Egypt to the West's Middle East strategy and to regional stability justify the topic's prominence. The general consensus is that the Islamists possess neither the necessary organisational structures, a charismatic leader or diverse enough public support to seriously threaten President Hosni Mubarak. But although the Mubarak regime's short-term future seems secure, many critics of the Egyptian crisis overlook or underestimate the importance of crucial regional and domestic trends which are likely to dominate Egypt's future.

Security clamp-down
The choices facing Egypt's political leadership are undeniably stark. The regime, however, remains firmly committed to its present political and international Monetary Fund (IMF)-inspired economic programme. Mr. Mubarak, having recently secured an extension to his presidency, believes now is not the appropriate time to concede ground to the opposition, Islamist or secular. But this policy of rigidity is fraught with danger, as no genuine attempt has been made to solve Egypt's deep-rooted problems. The regime's only viable tactic seems to be to press on with its brutal security clamp-down against the Islamists in and around Asut, by extending still further the emergency laws, continuing round-ups of suspects and engaging in torture. Middle East Watch has estimated that over 8,000 political prisoners are currently held in Egypt, the vast majority suspected Islamic militants.

Many Egyptians feel the security forces have become too brutal when dealing with the Islamists. This perception is only reinforced by the mass convictions and summary executions, a policy likely to create new martyrs for the Islamist cause and strengthen the view that Mr. Mubarak's regime is only protecting itself and its many privileges.

If Mr. Mubarak is to defeat the Islamists, he must deliver on the economic front. The IMF and World Bank believe Egypt's economic prospects show definite and solid signs of improvement. They highlight a 75 per cent reduction in food and other subsidies, a reduction in the budget deficit to 2.4 per cent of gross national product (GNP), and economic growth of around 4 per cent. However, the real story of the reforms has largely been one of disaster for the majority of Egypt's population. Most of the changes have benefitted only the better off.

In view of this, the government's continued attack on moderate Islamist organisations would seem very short-sighted. For Mr. Mubarak is forging an important opportunity to incorporate the constitutional Muslim Brotherhood into the political structure. If the Brotherhood was incorporated it would have two important consequences. First, to disperse the responsibility for Egypt's present difficulties, by giving political power and responsibility to a rival party, and second, it would dichotomise the Islamist movement, which has recently shown signs of agreement

regarding the merits of violence over democracy. But the Brotherhood and its political and social activities are seen by the government more than ever as a threat to its existence and to Egypt's stability.

In the short to medium term, the insurgency and the economic situation will not topple the regime. But, without an accommodation of moderate Islamist opinion into the political process, stringent policies to fight endemic corruption, and real economic reform which takes into account Egypt's poor, the Islamists could in the future seriously threaten it. The continuing popularity of Islam, shown by growing attendance at prayer, the greater readability of Islamic literature and a heightened opposition to secularism, is already laying firm foundations for a troubled future.

The need to reform economy and society
If keeping Egypt in the slow lane to reform triggers social and political unrest, Mr. Mubarak could institute a more radical economic reform programme, in the hope of securing faster, more sustainable prosperity. If this policy was successful many of the factors which now contribute to the Islamists' support and popularity would disappear. It would also strengthen and enhance the concepts of capitalism and secularism as necessary components for guaranteeing stability and prosperity.

But the prospect of the regime taking this line is remote. It has steadfastly sought to introduce gradual economic reform, endeavouring (with little success) to minimise the impact on the poor of rising prices on basic commodities. The regime is aware that accelerating the reforms could well see a proliferation in social unrest and an increase in support for militant Islam, as unemployment and poverty spread. There have already been riots over increases in bread prices. The government could not also ensure that its key supporters in the military and bureaucracy would be insulated from these crippling effects. Even a former prime minister, Atif Sidqi, has called the economic reforms "extreme". Such a policy is giving Islamic social services and businesses additional credibility in the face of a Western-prescribed "shock therapy".

As things stand, the future for Egypt and its people can only be difficult. Islamist violence against the security forces, government officials, tourists and the Christian minority will continue. The recent assassination of Major-General Rauf Khayrat indicates the militants' capabilities have not been curbed, indeed, it marks an increase in their sophistication.

None the less, President Mubarak is inclined not to undertake an overhaul of government personnel, especially in the interior and defence ministries. He believes this kind of endorsement will bolster the government's stability and cohesion. With the continuation of the harsh security measures, and the steady implementation of economic reforms, the regime feels it can survive and prosper by yielding nothing. But the IMF's economic programme has no guarantee of success, unless the endemic corruption and elitism is tackled and a new, more open business philosophy is injected into the country's commercial culture.

These changes must also be underpinned by the sustainable redistribution of wealth to Egypt's poor. For the Islamisation of Egyptian society continues, with the vilification of secular figures and institutions, the murder of author Farag Fawda, the censorship of plays and literature.

The government cannot take for granted the success of its current tactics against the insurgents. Even its elaborate control of mosques and clergy may not succeed in curbing the opposition's growing power and influence there. For Egypt to put its troubles behind it, and enjoy a modicum of stability and prosperity, the country must undergo little short of a revolution. It must galvanise the moribund political system and end corruption and economic stagnation.

Middle East International

U.S. report on Iran group stirs controversy

By Patrick Worsnip
Reuters

WASHINGTON — The United States says the Mujahedeen Khalk are not an important Iranian opposition group, but last week's flare-up in the struggle between them and Iran's rulers suggests Tehran does not share that view.

Iranian forces fired Scud surface-to-surface missiles on Sunday at a Mujahedeen base in eastern Iraq. According to the group, it was the first time Tehran had used the weapons since the Iran-Iraq war ended in 1988.

On Tuesday, two bombs exploded in the Iranian capital, killing two people. The Iranian authorities and the Mujahedeen accused each other of responsibility. The latest violence came just days after the U.S. State Department, in a long-awaited report, concluded that the Mujahedeen "are not a viable alternative to the current government of Iran."

On Wednesday, the official Iranian news agency, quoting informed military sources, said Iranian jet fighters attacked bases of the Mujahedeen inside Iraq.

It said the warplanes bombed guerrilla targets inside Iraq Wednesday morning.

For the Mujahedeen, this was no coincidence. They said the State Department report had given the green light for the Scud attack and branded the document "a whitewash of the atrocities committed by the religious, terrorist dictatorship ruling Iran."

The irony is that the United States considers the Islamic fundamentalist regime in Iran one of the most objectionable in the world, guilty of alleged backing of extremist groups, destabilising its neighbours and flagrantly violating human rights.

Despite this, the State Department decided that the principle that "my enemy's enemy is my friend" does not apply to the Mujahedeen. More controversially, it refused to talk to the group at all in preparing its report.

"Our mutual distaste for the behaviour of the regime in Tehran should not influence our analysis of the Mujahedeen," Wendy Sherman, assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs, said in a preface to the 41-page report.

U.S. officials cite several reasons for their distaste for the Mujahedeen, a Muslim-Marxist movement which fought against the former Shah of Iran, backed Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic revolution in 1979.

"Some people (in the State Department) still have some hopes about fishing up some moderates in the regime," said the organisation's Washington spokesman, Shahin Gohadi.

The State Department hotly denies any attempt to appease the Iranian government. But officials admit they believe the current leadership is likely to stay in power for the foreseeable future.

LETTERS

A new start

To the Editor:

AS MUCH as I make it a point not to get into heated religiously influenced political arguments, I just cannot bring myself to avoid commenting on a letter by G. Patricia Dajani. (Jordan Times Nov. 5). It is not so much that I disagree with her, nor do I disagree totally with what she is rebutting, but my point is that she is taking it a little too hard.

The Books of God direct the eye for an eye idea, at the same token let us not forget that the Bible also advises us to be forgiving.

Many of the great battles fought through out history, were in many cases, fought by individuals who either did not know or remember what they were dying for. Often they were fighting the battles of their forefathers, fighting for outdated convictions. Not to say that those beliefs were unjustified. But as time passes, the needs of the new generations, and their methods of settling differences, change with the times. Therefore, we would be doing a great injustice to our descendants, if we were to continue to stress upon them, our predecessors' ideals and gripes.

No one has ever suffered, gone hungry, died, or became a homeless refugee, from making peace with his neighbour or all parties involved, to keep their stands, and cherish them if need be. But let us not dictate to our children that they must believe what we do. Let the new generations have a new start, and let them decide whom to befriend, or whom to condemn. They have the right to translate history on their own. All we should do, is supply them with accurate recollections from both sides, then they can fill in the blanks and, using their own judgement, decide what words to use, in describing certain wrongdoing or injustices.

Nadim Al Jouni,
Abdoun,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

M. KAHIL



U.N. court can root out suspects

By Sara Henley
Reuters

THE HAGUE — It may take time, but the U.N. Yugoslavia war crimes tribunal can root out suspects evading trial — with a "super-indictment" that can hunt fugitives across the world.

"We are very patient," Christian Chartier, spokesman for the United Nations tribunal, said. "We have no power to try suspects in their absence, but we have a way to not close their cases."

The U.N. court's power to bring war criminals to book is ostensibly weakened by the fact that, unlike the Nuremberg Nazi war crimes trials after World War II, it starts with no suspects in custody, and it cannot try anyone in their absence.

In both the cases the tribunal has so far made pub-

lic, the main concern has been how to get the accused into court.

Its inaugural public hearing last week was tied up in the legal technicalities of bringing in one of its first cases from Germany, even though Germany is keen to hand over the suspect.

States with suspects are obliged to cooperate or face U.N. Security Council sanctions but even if they do not, the tribunal has an international policing power.

If individuals fail to appear before the court, the U.N. judges can issue an international arrest warrant through the cross-border police force Interpol.

A suspect would then become an internationally wanted person, effectively trapped in his hiding place.

In 10 years he may start to travel around and he is at risk of arrest" said Mr. Chartier. "We can then start to act."

Suspects with a "wanted" tag on their heads will also become hostages to any political changes in their refuge, Mr. Chartier said.

The rule will help get around problems in bringing in suspects who are hiding under cover of warfare, or who are being sheltered by any state unrecognised by the U.N.

In effect, it means Yugoslav war criminals could be convicted years after any peace is reached in the area — in the same way Nazi Gestapo chief Klaus Barbie was tried in 1987, 42 years after the Nuremberg trials started.

The "super-indictment" power could prove important in the case of the first man to be charged by the court, former Bosnian Serb camp commander Dragan Nikolic, who is believed to be living in the Bosnian Serb self-declared capital of Pale.

Tribunal officials have admitted that it will be a problem having him arrested — the Bosnian Serbs under Radovan Karadzic are under only a moral obligation to turn him in, as the territory they control is not a U.N.-recognised state.

If after time he does not appear, tribunal judges could reconfirm the charges against him and issue the Interpol warrant.

In practice, this power will only be valid for as long as the tribunal exists. It was founded by the Security Council in 1993 and will be wound up when the Security Council chooses.

But Mr. Chartier said the rule is the tribunal's answer to its inability to try people in their absence.

"It means we have no problem with trials in absentia," he said. "There is no deadline."

Japan proclaims trade surplus is starting to fall

TOKYO (R) — Japan finally declared Tuesday that its dollar-based trade surplus was at a turning point and heading for a decrease after it saw the surplus shrink for the third month in a row in October.

Officials and economists said, however, that they do not expect future falls to be faster than in the August-October quarter because Japan's exports may grow steadily on strong overseas demand, outstripping the growth in imports.

October also marked the first time in eight months that Japan's dollar trade surplus with the United States fell.

The politically sensitive surplus with Washington fell 6.8 per cent to an unadjusted \$4.79 billion from a year ago.

The overall customs-cleared trade surplus fell to an unadjusted \$9.28 billion in October from \$10.93 billion a year earlier. That was within private economists' forecasts, which had ranged from \$9.2 billion to \$10.9 billion.

"It (the trade surplus) is at a turning point. It has fallen year-on-year for the three straight months or one quarter," a ministry of finance (MOF) official said after the release of the October data.

But the official added that it was not clear whether the surplus would fall without exception in future months, or whether its downward trend would be uneven.

But the October surplus widened to a surplus of \$8.65 billion from \$8.46 billion a month earlier after adjusting for seasonal factors, the ministry said.

The MOF official said the year-on-year decrease in October owed much to growing imports from the United States, the European Union and Asian nations.

The official said currency fluctuations and oil prices were still unclear as factors, but imports were boosted mainly by growing purchases of automobiles, aircraft, clothing and semiconductors.

In volume terms, automobile imports doubled from a year earlier in October while vehicle exports grew 3.1 per cent.

Imports of semiconductors and related parts grew 44.0 per cent year-on-year in dollar terms. Crude oil imports grew 13.1 per cent year-on-year due to the effect of this year's hot summer, which depleted oil stocks, the official said.

The trend of replacing domestic products with imports is likely to continue, depending on the pace of a recovery in the domestic economy, economists said.

A strong yen may also continue to increase the quantity of the imports. But imports are unlikely to grow faster than exports, partly because the yen's recent rally to historic levels did not minimise Japan's exports.

Instead, they were boosted by overseas demand, the economists said. The dollar was traded at around 99 yen in October, against 106 yen a year earlier.

"Despite the recent appreciation of the yen, the trade figures showed that major Japanese industries, which had been more competitive in the past than overseas industries, still remain competitive," said Takashi Kodama, economist at Daiwa Institute of Research.

Mr. Kodama also said imports are difficult to grow faster than exports because exports were already around 50 per cent above the level of imports.

In October, exports totaled \$34.62 billion, while imports were \$25.34 billion.

Inter-Arab private investment falls 36%

KUWAIT (R) — The flow of private investments within the Arab World was cut by more than a third in 1993 to \$308.1 million, the Inter-Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation (IAIGC) said Tuesday.

"The total flow of private direct inter-Arab investments reached... \$308.1 million in 1993 compared with \$483.8 million in 1992, registering a fall of 36.6 per cent," the IAIGC, owned by Arab governments, said in its monthly report.

The report did not comment on the reasons for the fall.

Egypt ranked first in attracting Arab private investors with \$104.5 million pouring into its economy in 1993, but that was a 71.2 per cent fall compared with 1992, said the report.

The Kuwait-based corporation said the United Arab Emirates attracted \$55.1 million in 1993, 210.5 per cent up on 1992.

Saudi Arabia ranked first in exporting capital, with \$109 million invested in the economies of other Arab states.

Paradoxically, Lebanon and Syria, among the Arab World's least wealthy states, came second and third among Arab states exporting private capital to other Arabs with \$52 million and \$24.3 million respectively.

Economists say wealthy Gulf private investors prefer to place their funds in developed industrialised economies where their investments amount to hundreds of billions of dollars.

The report of the 20-year-old IAIGC said the Arab industrial sector took the lion's share of investments with \$137.7 million.

U.K. taxpayers foot bill for arms exports — survey

LONDON (R) — Britain is spending more than £5 million (\$7.96 million) of taxpayers' money a day to support arms exports, a Third World pressure group said Tuesday.

The World Development Movement (WDM), which embarrassed the government last week by challenging its aid to Malaysia, said Britain was the world's fourth largest seller of arms and that 80 per cent of British arms sales went to Third World countries.

WDM spokesman Ben Jackson said: "The public will be shocked by the vast amounts of their money which is spent on securing weapons deals in the Third World, even to regimes stamping on human rights."

Government export credits to support arms sales under the supervision of Trade Secretary Michael Heseltine, had risen sharply over the past few years, it said.

At £1.96 billion (\$3.12 billion), they now accounted for

nearly half of all export credits.

"Last year alone, as aid to Africa fell victim to treasury cuts, Michael Heseltine's Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) increased financial backing for arms sales to 'risky markets', by a staggering fivefold in one year," the WDM said.

Last week, the WDM successfully challenged the legality of a British government decision to use part of the overseas aid budget to fund the Pergau dam construction project in Malaysia.

Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd was found guilty of acting unlawfully in allowing aid funds to be used for the project.

The WDM said it was now launching a campaign to change the government's attitude to export credits for arms sales, which provided a safety net for companies and their banks selling to foreign markets which would otherwise be too costly.

"If the foreign country does not pay up, then the government uses taxpayers' money to foot the bill," the WDM statement said. "Yet ECGD has backed arms sales to countries such as Saudi Arabia, Oman, Nigeria, Turkey and Indonesia, all accused of violating human rights or in regions of tension."

The pressure group said it would deliver giant sweets to department of trade and industry offices Tuesday to publicise its message: "No sweeteners for arms sales."

The government Sunday denied allegations that Britain was using its overseas aid budget to win lucrative arms deals with undemocratic Third World regimes.

A report in Sunday's Observer newspaper said Britain is putting together a huge arms deal, worth an estimated £2 billion (\$3.2 billion) with Indonesia despite calls for a weapons embargo because of Jakarta's human rights record.

Syria to reform banking system, set up new banks

DAMASCUS (R) — Syrian Prime Minister Mahmoud Zu'bi has said his government plans to reform the banking system, unify exchange rates, and is studying setting up export and investment banks.

In a policy speech, obtained by Reuters Tuesday, that Mr. Zu'bi made before the newly-elected parliament Monday night, Mr. Zu'bi also said some other economic laws and regulations would be amended or abolished.

He said the government would continue to support the private sector towards a greater role in the socialist-oriented economy.

"The government will work in the next period to amend the laws of the specialised banks to parallel the economic development. We will study the possibility of setting up a bank for investment and one for export," Mr. Zu'bi said.

Mr. Zu'bi did not give details but economic sources said among the laws to be amended or abolished were those imposing harsh penalties amounting to 15 years in jail with hard labour against foreign currency dealers.

"The government will work to unify the different exchange rates in the country in stages and in a studied way within the framework of an integral and comprehensive economic plan," Mr. Zu'bi added.

He gave no timetable for the removal of the existing exchange rates system, which gives three different values for the Syrian pound against other currencies.

Economic sources said they expected to see a unified rate no later than before the end of next year.

The rates of the Syrian pound to the dollar are: An official rate of 11.2 pounds to one dollar, a customs rate of 23 pounds and an encouragement rate of 42 pounds.

The pound traders on the black market at between 48 and 50 pounds to one dollar.

Euro Court curbs European Commission world trade role

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Court of Justice Tuesday curbed the role of the European Commission to negotiate on behalf of European Union (EU) member states in world trade issues.

The long-awaited court pronouncement opens the way for the EU to try to complete ratification of the Uruguay Round trade agreement by a tight end-year deadline, but raises questions about how the union will conduct its trade policy in future.

The commission had sought confirmation from the court that it has exclusive competence to act for the EU after member states insisted that they as well as the commission should sign the accord setting up the new World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The agreement was signed in Marrakesh in April, and the WTO is due to be established in Geneva at the beginning of January, although other big trading powers such as the United States and Japan also have still not ratified the Uruguay Round deal.

The sources said the commission's court action had apparently backfired against it because of the binding opinion that the commission must share world trade negotiating responsibility with member states in services and intellectual property rights (IPR), which are new areas covered in the Uruguay Round.

Eight member states and the EU Council of Ministers opposed the commission in the Luxembourg-based court. They wanted a future say in many areas of the accord on services and IPR negotiated by the commission.

They argued that the present EU treaties did not cover services and IPR in sufficient detail for the commission alone to negotiate over them at worldwide level, which it does on other matters under rules governing the EU's common commercial policy.

Three countries — Greece, Germany and Britain — have already ratified the accord setting up the WTO and its annexes containing the specific agreements negotiated under GATT on areas such as agriculture, textiles and telecommunications.

Ukraine's Kuchma signs decree on privatising land

KIEV (R) — Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma Monday ordered a speed-up in farm reform, authorising for the first time private ownership of land.

A presidential decree, published by Ukrinform News Agency, constitutes the first major step undertaken by Mr. Kuchma as part of a programme to introduce market reforms.

The programme was drawn up with the approval of the International Monetary Fund, which last month approved an initial credit of \$371 million.

The decree urged local councils to speed up transfer of land to private hands. It

said landowners could sell, let or bequeath their land to Ukrainian citizens, provided they did not change its primary purpose.

Communists had resisted all plans to legalise sale of land. They hold about 90 of parliament's 450 seats, while other leftists with similar views have a further 60 to 70.

"Private ownership of land is perhaps the most important step in carrying out land reform," First Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Pynzenyk told Reuters after the decree was published.

"Today, everyone understands that if such an initiative is not undertaken, nothing can go forward," he said.

Belarus rolls back some price rises

MINSK (R) — Bread and milk prices were lowered in Belarus Monday after President Alexander Lukashenko demanded an immediate rollback of recent increases.

But most prices in the former Soviet republic remained at higher levels and top ministers said they would make no further cuts in order to keep a market reform programme on course.

"This is a temporary, tactical retreat," Prime Minister Mikhail Chiriz told a news conference three days after Mr. Lukashenko's emotional demand to cancel price increases.

"Next month, we will return to the question of free prices for the same goods. We will continue to reject subsidies. Our president's reaction was a healthy one of a man with a big heart."

The price of a litre of milk fell from 310 Belarusian rubles to 235 in most shops and bread from about 620 to 570.

Monthly salaries in the republic sandwiched between Russia and Poland stand at about 120,000 rubles — or about \$20.

In a dramatic live television appearance Friday, Mr. Lukashenko said politicians, journalists and parliament were hindering his activity.

Kyrgyzstan clamps down on get-rich-quick funds

BISHKEK (R) — Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev issued decrees Tuesday designed to tighten financial regulation and head off possible scandals involving get-rich-quick schemes similar to the defunct MMM fund in Russia.

A separate decree promises to open the transport sector to free competition by creating a licensing system for trucking enterprises, taxi and bus ventures.

The decrees on investors

rights set rules for founding investment funds, boost the powers of a national securities watchdog and tidy up regulations for savers depositing money at banks.

They aim to prevent a situation like the one in Russia, when MMM stopped buying back shares, leaving investors holding worthless paper. Critics said MMM was a pyramid scheme, using cash from new investors to buy back old shares at rising prices.

Local and foreign investors have urged the government to set up investment and export-import banks.

All banks in Syria are state-owned. They make very limited use of computers. Simply depositing or withdrawing money can take more than an hour.

Mr. Zu'bi also spoke about the necessity of abolishing, amending or introducing new economic regulations to parallel economic development in the country over the last four years.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 16, 1994
By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Wright Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Get friends to help you put affairs on a more modern basis and try to side step any argument that could occur under the mid-day Moon square. Pluto aspect that is affecting your chart.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Think about how you can best put your most interesting capabilities to your advancement and then you will be able to advance towards your aims.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Take a good look at your residence and consider what you can do to make it more habitable, then you can add those conditions to achieve this worthwhile purpose.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Think about those with whom you have been routinely allied for sometime past and let them know you appreciate and want more constructive progress.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Think about your property and possessions and what you can do to improve them and then quickly put into motion some beneficial results.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Decide what your long range plans and ambitions of a personal nature are early, then you can visualise the best means to make them a part of your life.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) You now have a chance to organise and analyse your thoughts and ideas so that they can be far more productive for you in the days ahead.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) First consider you long planned for desires and then consider new and progressive means by which they can become an active part of your life.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) You start the week with good ideas for more stability to worldly activities and reputation, then you can add some additional zip to your life.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Consider plans for taking a trip that has been planned for sometime and then add some further places to go or persons to contact them.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have been trying for sometime to get mate to do what you want and if you approach from a different angle you can achieve this result now.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You have one who has been reliable for a long time to assist your early in the day while later a more modern and up to date person is helpful.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This is the day when you can organise and plan whatever your activities early on a very intelligent basis while later put more zest into doing them.

Birthstone of November: Topaz-Tiger's Eye

THE Daily Crossword by Henry Satchell

ACROSS

- 1 Local
- 2 Lie tender
- 3 Fine spray
- 4 "we are"
- 5 Tender
- 6 Nymph of legend
- 7 Flutist
- 8 Unconscious
- 9 Bank transaction
- 10 Legation
- 11 Firm unit
- 12 Pictorial
- 13 Expense
- 14 Absent
- 15 Cherished
- 16 Ripen
- 17 Br. gun
- 18 Legends in the Bahamas
- 19 One who practices 20A
- 20 Tax relief
- 21 Selva
- 22 Elev.
- 23 In union
- 24 Wire man
- 25 Chivalrous work
- 26 Advance letters
- 27 Drink status
- 28 One who practices 20A
- 29 Scottish folkdance
- 30 "When I see"
- 31 Feet name?
- 32 Possessive
- 33 and shined
- 34 Victory meeting
- 35 Sordid
- 36 Psychologist
- 37 Favourite's card
- 38 DOWN
- 39 Tub
- 40 Leave the straight and narrow
- 41 Action Patricia
- 42 Defiant incumber
- 43 Set of moral values
- 44 Avoided
- 45 Sound the horn
- 46 Wreath
- 47 Like some vegetables
- 48 Saint
- 49 Religious image
- 50 Food fish
- 51 Heavy weight
- 52 Postpone st.
- 53 Thick swelling
- 54 Pin director
- 55 Fairy tale monster
- 56 Take care of
- 57 Bryant or Loo
- 58 Essential
- 59 Gay
- 60 Spilled
- 61 Row
- 62 Slippy beach
- 63 Most optimistic
- 64 Court-imposed prize companionship
- 65 Aquarion fish
- 66 Oriental temple
- 67 324 lbs
- 68 White hearn
- 69 Factual
- 70 Dwell on
- 71 Front of a ship
- 72 Deserter

Puzzle solved:

Across: 1. Local, 2. Lie tender, 3. Fine spray, 4. "we are", 5. Tender, 6. Nymph of legend, 7. Flutist, 8. Unconscious, 9. Bank transaction, 10. Legation, 11. Firm unit, 12. Pictorial, 13. Expense, 14. Absent, 15. Cherished, 16. Ripen, 17. Br. gun, 18. Legends in the Bahamas, 19. One who practices 20A, 20. Tax relief, 21. Selva, 22. Elev., 23. In union, 24. Wire man, 25. Chivalrous work, 26. Advance letters, 27. Drink status, 28. One who practices 20A, 29. Scottish folkdance, 30. "When I see", 31. Feet name?, 32. Possessive, 33. and shined, 34. Victory meeting, 35. Sordid, 36. Psychologist, 37. Favourite's card, 38. DOWN, 39. Tub, 40. Leave the straight and narrow, 41. Action Patricia, 42. Defiant incumber, 43. Set of moral values, 44. Avoided, 45. Sound the horn, 46. Wreath, 47. Like some vegetables, 48. Saint, 49. Religious image, 50. Food fish, 51. Heavy weight, 52. Postpone st., 53. Thick swelling, 54. Pin director, 55. Fairy tale monster, 56. Take care of, 57. Bryant or Loo, 58. Essential, 59. Gay, 60. Spilled, 61. Row, 62. Slippy beach, 63. Most optimistic, 64. Court-imposed prize companionship, 65. Aquarion fish, 66. Oriental temple, 67. 324 lbs, 68. White hearn, 69. Factual, 70. Dwell on, 71. Front of a ship, 72. Deserter.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Gold & Gems

one to one

PERSONAL SHOPPING

Amman, Jordan

DAJANI'S Jewelry

THE BETTER HALF, By Glasbergen

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LITRL

DUXEE

DARFIA

BILDOY

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: THE

Yesterday's Jumbles: CHEEK EXULT FEWEST VERIFY

Answer: How he felt when his car ran out of gas — FUEL-ISH

Beckenbauer in charge at Bayern Munich

MUNICH (R) — A new era began at Bayern Munich Monday when "Kaiser" Franz Beckenbauer was elected chairman of the club he joined as a fresh-faced teenager in the 1960s and later led to a string of triumphs.

All but 10 of Bayern's 2,928 members who took part in the election in Munich's Olympic Stadium cast their vote for Beckenbauer, who both captained and coached West Germany to World Cup victories.

Beckenbauer, 49, succeeds Fritz Scherer, who will now become one of Bayern's three vice-presidents after being at the helm of Germany's reigning soccer champion for nine years.

"One man alone means nothing," Beckenbauer said after his election. "We can only be strong as a team."

In this farewell speech, Scherer said he had no regrets about losing his job to Beckenbauer, until now a Bayern vice-president.

"To make way for someone like Franz Beckenbauer is no demotion but a challenge to work with him to make Bayern even stronger than it is now," Scherer said.



German soccer hero Franz Beckenbauer (R) looks on as former FC Bayern Munich President Fritz Scherer (L) checks the time and former Munich striker Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (C) regards the scene as club members gathered to cast their vote

for a new president. Beckenbauer was later elected club president and both Rummenigge and Scherer are now two of three vice-presidents (AFP photo)

FA charge Grobbelaar

LONDON (AFP) — Southampton goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar was formally charged by the Football Association Monday over allegations that he took bribes to fix matches.

The FA said the player faces charges of "conduct which is improper or liable to bring the game into disrepute" and "acceptance of consideration with a view to influencing the result of a match."

Grobbelaar has 14 days in which to answer the charges. An FA disciplinary commission will hear the accusations.

But FA Chief Executive Graham Kelly gave Grobbelaar the all-clear to continue playing for his club, saying he would not be temporarily suspended and no other action would be taken against him at this stage.

Kelly stressed that the goalkeeper was innocent until proven guilty, saying: "I think it would be very extreme to suspend a person until he has a chance to explain himself."

"We want to bend over backwards to be fair to him and allow him to answer the charges."

But Kelly said that having considered documents and videos relating to the allegations, the FA had concluded there was a case to answer.

Kelly felt it would be difficult for Grobbelaar to continue playing with the charges hanging over him, but said: "That is entirely a matter for Southampton."

He added: "We view the charges very seriously indeed. But he has time to reflect upon the charges, to consult with his advisers and come back to us with his explanation."

Lawrie McMenemy, Southampton's director of football, said: "I'm delighted he's been allowed to carry on playing."

"He will be given the opportunity to go in there with his solicitor and clear up whatever charges are levelled against him," he added.

Southampton now expects the 37-year-old Zimbabwe goalkeeper to return from international duty in Harare to begin preparations for the game against Arsenal Saturday.

Grobbelaar was due to return to England Monday

but his lawyer Brian Cavanagh said: "I expect he'll now go back on Wednesday."

Allegations that Grobbelaar took bribes to throw English Premier League matches first surfaced in the Sun newspaper last week.

He has flatly denied the claims and is suing the newspaper, whose video and tape-recorded evidence was passed to FA officials, lawyers and police.

The goalkeeper, a sporting hero in Zimbabwe, put the furore aside on Sunday by helping his national side to a 2-1 African Nations Cup victory over Zaire.

McMenemy stressed that Southampton had not yet seen the video tapes, secretly filmed by the Sun newspaper.

But he added: "Of all the players I have ever dealt with, this Bruce Grobbelaar is a one-off. He can go out there and live with it."

Grobbelaar Monday slipped out of sight of the media that has hounded him since allegations he accepted bribes to fix match results were published last week.

Hill puts on brave face; Schumacher denies accusations

LONDON (Agencies) — Damon Hill arrived home Tuesday still trying to erase the disappointment of the Australian Grand Prix from his mind.

The Williams-Renault driver confessed that the way he lost the Formula One drivers' championship to bitter rival Michael Schumacher in Adelaide on Sunday continues to haunt him.

And as the 34-year-old touched down after an exhausting 22-hour flight from Australia, he admitted that his mind keeps creeping back to the controversial crash with Benetton driver Schumacher which ended his hopes of emulating his late father's title triumphs.

Controversy still rages over whether Schumacher deliberately took Hill out of the race on the 36th lap, realising that his own race was over with his car wrecked after an error that saw him drive into a wall.

Television screenings appeared to show the German looking in his mirror before swerving across Hill to cause the collision that forced the British driver out and gave Schumacher the championship by the slender margin of just one point.

The moment still causes Hill visible pain, but he said: "I'm obviously disappointed by what happened, but I'm not destroyed by it."

Hill still refuses to blame Schumacher for what happened — unlike former world champion Alain Prost and ex-motor cycling star Barry Sheene — but he did not hint

that Schumacher might have been more aware of what he was doing than he was made out.

In Frankfurt, Schumacher denied he had cheated his way to the world motor racing crown and shrugged his shoulders at the hostile reception his Formula One victory has received from the British popular press.

British tabloid newspapers were enraged at Schumacher's victory over the Briton after a collision in the Australian Grand Prix and their accusations of cheating

were front page news in German papers as Schumacher returned to his homeland.

Told of the British reaction, Schumacher shrugged his shoulders and said there was no hard feelings between himself and Hill.

Knicks fourth-quarter stall gives Jazz victory

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — New York Knicks coach Pat Riley will have a hard time getting over his team's fourth-quarter performance against the Utah Jazz.

"We got hung up on 88 points forever and just could not get over the hump," Riley said after Utah rallied from an 88-83 deficit with 10 minutes remaining Monday night to rout the Knicks 110-

97. "They just took it right to us. It was a bad, bad fourth period... we turned the ball over and they were just getting layups."

Antoine Carr scored in the lane to start a 16-0 run, John Stockton tied it with a 3-pointer with 9:05 remaining and the Jazz didn't allow another point until they had the game well in hand at

99-88 with five minutes left. "I can't explain to you how big this win is," said Karl Malone, who had 29 points and 13 rebounds as the Jazz ended a three-game losing streak.

"Considering what's happened to us — as far as this one at the right time — this is one of the biggest wins I've ever been involved in."

Utah outscored New York 31-13 in the final quarter.

"We were right there, right up until Stockton hit that 3," New York's Derek Harper said. "They seemed to rally behind that and go from there."

Stockton, who had 20 points and 14 assists, just beat the shot clock.

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	The film which won seven Oscars IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45		Eric Roberts & Jeff Fahey in FREESALL Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		The academy awards film THE PIANO Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD '2' SPEED Shows: 3:15, 5:00		Presents "Water is a Gift of Life" A family and children play produced and directed by: Akram Abul Ragheb Daily at 10 a.m. The Arabic Movie The Immigrant Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Announces a temporary suspension of the performance Qirbeh Makhzouqa "Punctured Bag" We will announce the resumption of the play in its new form later on.	Presents: The political satire: Al Salam Ya Salam Daily at 8:30 p.m. Saturday & Sunday is the theatre's holiday.

Season ending Slims Championships begin

Halard ends Sanchez Vicario's winning streak

NEW YORK (AFP) — Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, the best player in women's tennis this year, was knocked out of the Virginia Slims Championship Monday by unseeded Julie Halard of France.

Halard, ranked 2nd in the world, ousted the world number two 6-2, 1-6, 7-6 (7-2). "I played the best tennis I ever did," said Halard, who had the crowd at Madison Square Garden on their feet applauding her tenacity as well as her blistering ground strokes.

She trailed 2-4 in the third set but held her serve in the next game with an ace and broke Sanchez Vicario in the next to level at 4-4.

Halard said that when she knew for sure she could beat Sanchez Vicario, who had won 21 straight matches coming into the \$3.5 million season finale.

"When I came back for all, I began to think that very much," she said.

Halard steamrolled the Spaniard in the opening set, mixing deep ground strokes with short balls, volleys and drop shots to keep her on the

defensive. She had beaten Sanchez Vicario once before, at Wimbledon in 1992. And she knew the Supreme surface was not Sanchez Vicario's favourite. Even so, Halard was aware that she would have to be aggressive to win against a woman who had won eight tournaments this year, including the French and U.S. opens.

"With Arantxa it's difficult to finish the rally at the back of the court," Halard said. "In the debraker I knew I had to go to the net to finish the points."

Sanchez Vicario said she had nothing to regret. "I'm not disappointed, because I think I played well," she said. "I'm not a machine. I'm a human being. You never can win everything."

After winning the first set in 39 minutes, Halard flagged.

"I played very well the first set, but we had some tough rallies. At the beginning of the second set, I didn't have enough breath to run," she said. "My legs were shaking."

In the third, she got a second wind, buoyed by the

support of the vocal New York crowd.

Halard wrapped up the match in two hours and 14 minutes when Sanchez Vicario blasted a forehand service return straight into the net.

In the second round, Halard will face the winner of the match between Martina Navratilova and Gabriela Sabatini.

In Monday's earlier singles, eighth-seeded Kimiko Date of Japan beat Sabine Hack of Germany 6-3, 6-0.

Date, seeded eighth and making her first appearance in the final of the women's tennis season, trailed by a break at 2-3 in the first set.

But she won the next 10 games to wrap up the match in 57 minutes over the German, who got into the event as an alternate when Bulgarian Magdalena Maleeva withdrew.

Date, currently ranked 10th in the world after reaching a high of number five, was thrilled to be playing in the championships for the first time.

"I cannot even believe it," she said. "This is a tournament I dreamed about."

That's why I really want to play my best."

Martina begins final tournament

All eyes will be on the 38-year-old crowd favourite. "If you go back 10-15 years ago, it wasn't anything like that," Pam Shriver said. "But they grew to know her, and the barriers came down — with a funny name and a funny accent. With a different lifestyle, with muscles and going against Chris Evert, who was... Chris Evert."

"People got to understand her better... in the end, they saw enough of her emotion on the court, and they got to know her history... The next thing you know, people feel they grew up with Martina. She's been around for 20-some years."

Since 1973, actually, when she joined the pro tour. And in that span she has won a record 167 singles titles — more than any other man or woman — and a record 165 doubles crowns.

She has played 1,649 matches and won 1,438 of them. In 1983, she posted an

incredible 86-1 match record. In a three-year span from 1982 through 1984, she lost a total of six matches while winning 254.

This year, she has won just one title — the Paris Indoors in February. Unless she wins here, she will snap her streak of winning two or more singles titles each year since 1975.

The Garden has been the scene of some of her greatest triumphs. Whether the tournament was in March or in November, Navratilova has dominated, winning seven singles and 11 doubles titles and reaching the singles title match four other times.

All of that winning has been lucrative. She has earned more than \$20 million.

"It will be very interesting," said Craig Kardon, Navratilova's coach. "I think if she could put all her emotions aside as to this being her last match or last week, then I think she can play well."

"But when she gets in her matches, she gets a little bit careful. I think she is worried about how everybody is going to remember. She is trying to be a little bit too perfect."

Also playing for the top two slots and places in the semi-finals are the serve and volley brigade of Goran Ivanisevic, Becker and Edberg.

"It's always easier indoors against a baseliner," said Edberg, who qualified for the year-end event for a 10th consecutive time. "At least you can make them play."

Becker is the only German taking part after Michael Stich, the defending champion, was knocked out of contention with a first round defeat in Antwerp last week.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Shahab Al Hussein lose in Arab volleyball tournament

BEIRUT (Petra) — Jordan's Shahab Al Hussein lost 3-0 to Al Busheir in the opening match of the 13th Arab Volleyball Championship which began in the Lebanese capital Tuesday. Ten Arab countries are participating in the competition.

Med Games hope to link Israel and Palestine

PARIS (AFP) — Israel may compete against Palestine and Arab countries at the Mediterranean Games at Bari, Italy, in 1997. Claude Collard, president of the Med Games Committee, said Tuesday before leaving for an Executive Commission meeting in Bari he expected to be able to obtain majority approval for Palestine and Israel being admitted. Collard intends to meet delegates from Syria, Libya and Lebanon to make sure they would abide by a majority decision. He said there was no question of Palestine being admitted separately. Israel, barred from the Asian Games since 1978, was last week admitted to the European Association of National Olympic Committees. Palestine is a member of the Olympic Council of Asia and had a competitor at the Asian Games in Hiroshima, Japan, last month.

head of the bidding committee, said. The International Olympic Committee announces a short list of four candidates from the nine bidding cities on Jan. 24. The IOC session at Budapest in June will make the final choice. Salt Lake City (Utah), Sion (Switzerland), Ostersund (Sweden) and Quebec are favourites to make the final four.

More honours for Colin Jackson

LONDON (AFP) — British hurdler Colin Jackson was named as his country's Sports Personality of the Year Monday. The Welsh athlete received his award from the Princess Royal at a star studded ceremony at London's Cafe Royal. Cardiff-born Jackson was unbeaten over the 110 metres hurdles this year as he retained his Commonwealth and European titles. He was awarded 20 one-kilogramme gold bars earlier this season for winning each of the golden four Grand Prix meetings at Oslo, Zurich, Brussels and Berlin. Jackson beat other nominees including women's world number one golfer Laura Davies and racing driver Damon Hill for the award.

Careca joins J-League football

TOKYO (AFP) — Brazilian striker Careca finally secured a berth in the J-League next season when his team, Kashima Reysol, were promoted from the second division Tuesday. Careca Osaka were also promoted by the board of directors, bringing the J-League to 14 teams for next season. Careca was runner-up to leading scorer Gary Lineker of England in the 1986 World Cup. He joined Reysol from Napoli last year.

Spurs appoint Francis

LONDON (AFP) — Gerry Francis has been confirmed as the new manager of Tottenham Hotspur in succession to Ossie Ardiles. Chairman Alan Sugar made the announcement Tuesday to end the uncertainty at White Hart Lane after Ardiles was dismissed two weeks ago. Francis, who walked out on Queens Park Rangers following a disagreement with the board last week, has been hot favourite to take over the North London Club after David Pleat rejected the chance to rejoin the club as general manager. Francis said: "It was sad to leave QPR but this is a new chapter in my life. We've got a very talented squad here."

Swiss choose clay court for Davis Cup tie

GENEVA (R) — Switzerland have chosen an indoor clay surface for their Davis Cup World Group first round tie against the Netherlands next February 3-5 in Geneva's Palexpo Exhibition Hall. Swiss non-playing captain Stephane Oberer said Tuesday the decision was made jointly with Davis Cup stalwarts Marc Rosset and Jakob Hlasek as the big-serving Dutch led by Richard Krajicek were less effective on the slower surface. Rosset won the Olympic gold medal on clay in Barcelona in 1992 and, partnered by Hlasek, took the French and Italian Open doubles titles in the same year on similar courts.

Samaranch to meet Mandela

LAUSANNE (AFP) — International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch is to meet South African President Nelson Mandela as part of an African trip which starts Wednesday. Samaranch heads a delegation of top Olympic officials, although no dates were given in the IOC's brief announcement Monday. The group includes Mario Vazquez-Rana, head of the Association of National Olympic Committees, Keba Mbaye of the IOC's executive committee, Jean-Claude Ganga, head of the Association of African National Olympic Committees and Fekrou Kidane, the IOC's director of international cooperation.

Quebec on course for Olympics

QUEBEC CITY (AFP) — The International Skiing Federation has approved two sites for the men's downhill if Quebec City is awarded the 2002 Winter Olympics. "It's a very important decision because it means all our competition sites have been approved by the international federations," Rene Paquet,

Tennis goes rock 'n' roll at ATP Tour finals

FRANKFURT (AFP) — The ATP trotted out 'rock' n' roll tennis at the kick-off to this week's three million dollar Tour Finals, but dressed its main characters in stiff suits and ties.

Only Andre Agassi, the non-conformist U.S. Open champion, bucked the dress code of dark suit, blue shirt and patterned tie which adorned the likes of Pete

Sampras, Stefan Edberg, Boris Becker, Spaniards Sergi Bruguera and Alberto Berasategui and American Michael Chang.

The bearded Agassi appeared on stage in jeans, a white T-shirt, blazer and cowboy boots. For once, his long hair flowed free instead of being crammed in under a trademark baseball hat.

"If I play like I have for the

past three months (when he has compiled a formidable 21-1 match record and three tournament titles), I like my chances against anybody," said the world number two.

Agassi is expected to dominate the four-man Red Group, which features Chang, Bruguera and Berasategui.

"The question is how long can you keep up the level. I

hope to play better than I have been, otherwise I'll probably be a step behind," he said.

The presentation of the finals was made among the chaos of FanFest, the Tour's travelling roadshow of tennis games, multi-media demonstrations and skill tests for the public.

Hundreds of schoolchildren and teenagers flocked to

an exhibition hall for the event, where loud rock music set the mood of 1990s tennis.

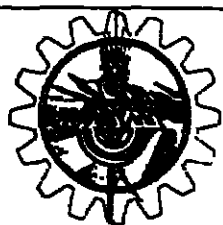
Agassi and Becker got the biggest cheers from the fans.

The White Group, with Sampras at the top, is by far the toughest.

Also playing for the top two slots and places in the semi-finals are the serve and volley brigade of Goran Ivanisevic, Becker and Edberg.

"It's always easier indoors against a baseliner," said Edberg, who qualified for the year-end event for a 10th consecutive time. "At least you can make them play."

Becker is the only German taking part after Michael Stich, the defending champion, was knocked out of contention with a first round defeat in Antwerp last week.



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1. The Project Description

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2. Scope of Contracts

Contract No. APC/70/94 - New Main Brine Intake Jetty will require approx 6,600m of driven tubular steel pile, dia 760 - 1320 mm; additional 650 tonne of steel pile caps, bracing and decking; approx 400m³ of timber decking; approx 3,800 m of 2,000 mm dia steel pipeline; installation of pumps and equipment supplied under a separate contract detailed below.

Contract No. APC/71/94 - New Main Brine Intake Pumps and Associated Equipment will include manufacture and supply and supervision of installation on completed jetty of 4 No. pumps, each rated as above, electric motors, switchgear, transformers, and connection to the existing electrical supply.

3. Prequalification Documents

Application documents for prequalification are available from:

Arab Potash Company Ltd. and
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Telephone 0734 261061
Fax 0734 352 172

For further information or clarification contact the Manager of Projects at the site office

Telephone 3 377121, 377122 or 377123
Fax 3 377130 or 377125

Completed applications are to be returned by December 31, 1994 to the Arab Potash Company's Head Office address.

Managing Director

Mansell top British earner

LONDON (AFP) — Nigel Mansell was Britain's highest earning sports star in the past 12 months, according to the figures released Tuesday.

A BBC Radio Sports Yearbook has Mansell picking up nine million pounds for his 12 months work as Indy Car and Formula One driver to oust boxer Lennox Lewis from pole position.

Lewis drops to second place on £5.2 million, with Chris Eubank moving up to third on 3.4 million.

Golfer Colin Montgomerie is a newcomer to the charts, while Frank Bruno, snooker player Steve Davis and chess genius Nigel Short all slide into comparative poverty and are off the list from last year.

Compilers of the book have 400 metre hurdler Sally Gunnell as the highest-earning woman with 450,000 pounds.

Top earners between Nov. 1, 1993 and Nov. 1, 1994 with last year's position in brackets:

- (2) Nigel Mansell £9.0
- (1) Lennox Lewis £5.2
- (9) Chris Eubank £3.4
- (3) Nick Faldo £2.4
- (4) David Platt £2.2
- (5) Paul Gascoigne £1.5
- (6) Gary Lineker £1.5
- (11) Stephen Hendry £1.4
- (—) Colin Montgomerie £1.4
- (8) Nigel Benn £1.2
- (12) Ian Woosnam £1.2
- (7) Linford Christie £1.1
- (12) Pat Eddery £1.0

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠975 ♠AQ102 ♠J64 ♠K83
West's opening bid of one diamond is passed round to you. What action do you take?
A.—Your hand has neither the strength nor the distribution for a balancing takeout double and we would like a bid more to balance with one no trump, especially in diamonds. Since we don't believe in letting the opponents play unbalanced at the one-level, we would balance with one heart, despite the fact we have only a four-card suit.

Q.2—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A84 ♠K985 ♠A76 ♠A103
Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you respond?
A.—The answer depends on your no-trump range. If you play 16-18 points, jump to six no trump; if it is 15-17, invite with four no trump. With a hand that does not contain a ruffing value, we would not bother to explore for a possible 4-4 fit in hearts.

Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠A9854 ♠Q ♠A954 ♠762
The bidding has proceeded:
South East
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 NT Pass ?
What do you bid now?
A.—Partner's bid shows a balanced 19-20 points, so rule out all thoughts of slam. Raise to three no trump. Don't even think about re-bidding your poor five-card spade suit or introducing diamonds—both those actions would indicate slam aspirations.

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A9854 ♠Q ♠A954 ♠762
The bidding has proceeded:
South East
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 NT Pass ?
What do you bid now?
A.—First, let's eliminate two take-out bids. Never make a takeout double on a two-suited hand. And if a cue-bid by you would show a two-suiter, you won't know what to do after partner responds in hearts. We would bid either one spade or four spades, with a leaning toward the former, since it keeps open a chance for slam if partner has some key values, or superior fit in hearts.

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠A1097632 ♠AQ976 ♠Void ♠Q
What is your opening bid?
A.—The hand has hands with which we would open one spade when holding four spades and five hearts, but this is not one of them. Should partner respond one no trump we have an easy rebid regardless of methods. Our minor-suit holdings are such that we could pass comfortably, or rebid two diamonds if partner's response was forcing.

Q.6—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠A1097632 ♠AQ976 ♠Void ♠Q
What is your opening bid?
A.—The hand has hands with which we would open one spade when holding four spades and five hearts, but this is not one of them. Should partner respond one no trump we have an easy rebid regardless of methods. Our minor-suit holdings are such that we could pass comfortably, or rebid two diamonds if partner's response was forcing.

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Rabin vows to ensure American aid to Israel

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin vowed ahead of a trip to Washington on Tuesday to safeguard U.S. aid to Israel, amid growing fears among Israelis the new Congress will cut their \$3 billion-a-year package.

Mr. Rabin, due in the United States on Wednesday, said Israel needed the aid for its security and to help finance peace deals with Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), especially in the face of attacks by Palestinian opponents.

The package — \$1.8 billion in military aid and \$1.2 billion in economic aid — is more aid than any other country receives from the United States.

"I'll meet elements in America concerning what they call the 1996 budget years which begins on Oct. 1, 1995... to ensure the size of aid is maintained," Mr. Rabin told reporters at an Israeli army post in the Gaza Strip.

He and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres tried to brush aside fears, boosted by an Israeli newspaper report on Tuesday, that the new Republican-led Congress would cut aid.

"I feel quite self-assured that it won't happen," Mr. Peres told reporters when asked if he feared a short-or long-term cut.

Israel's biggest newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth ran a headline across its front page screaming: "Threat to halt

civilian aid from the United States — \$1.2 billion."

The newspaper said arch-conservative Republican Senator Jesse Helms, due to head the Foreign Relations Committee in the new Congress, had stunned Israeli officials with a proposal to halt the \$1.2 billion in economic aid.

"I would like to see a very precise record of his remarks before I shall react to them. I wouldn't like to react just by a hasty publication," Mr. Peres said.

Yedioth Ahronoth said the initiative, proposed to the Israeli embassy in Washington by a Helms advisor, would forgive Israel's outstanding debt. But the newspaper said the net effect would be a sharp cut.

"Americans from all parties have realised that only a strong Israel can prevent wars, contribute to stability and tranquility in the region and make it possible for Israel to take calculated risks for peace," Mr. Rabin said.

Israeli opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu said last week Israel should prepare for a cut in aid following the thrashing of President Bill Clinton's Democratic Party in congressional elections.

Mr. Netanyahu, the Likud Party chief, said the vote signalled a desire to treat problems at home rather than abroad.

But Mr. Peres told reporters on Tuesday: "We have very good relations with both parties. Also, the foreign re-

lations of the United States is bipartisan, and I hope that will also remain the situation."

Asked how it would be possible to reach a peace accord with Syria if the United States withheld aid to Damascus, Mr. Peres said: "I wouldn't jump to conclusions. Let's negotiate and then we shall see."

Israeli politicians have always perceived U.S. aid as an important issue with an electorate that is one of the most heavily taxed in the world.

The U.S. administration pointedly withheld loan guarantees to Israel until Mr. Rabin took office in 1992 on a promise to reduce government support for Jewish settlement in occupied lands which flourished under his right-wing predecessor Yitzhak Shamir.

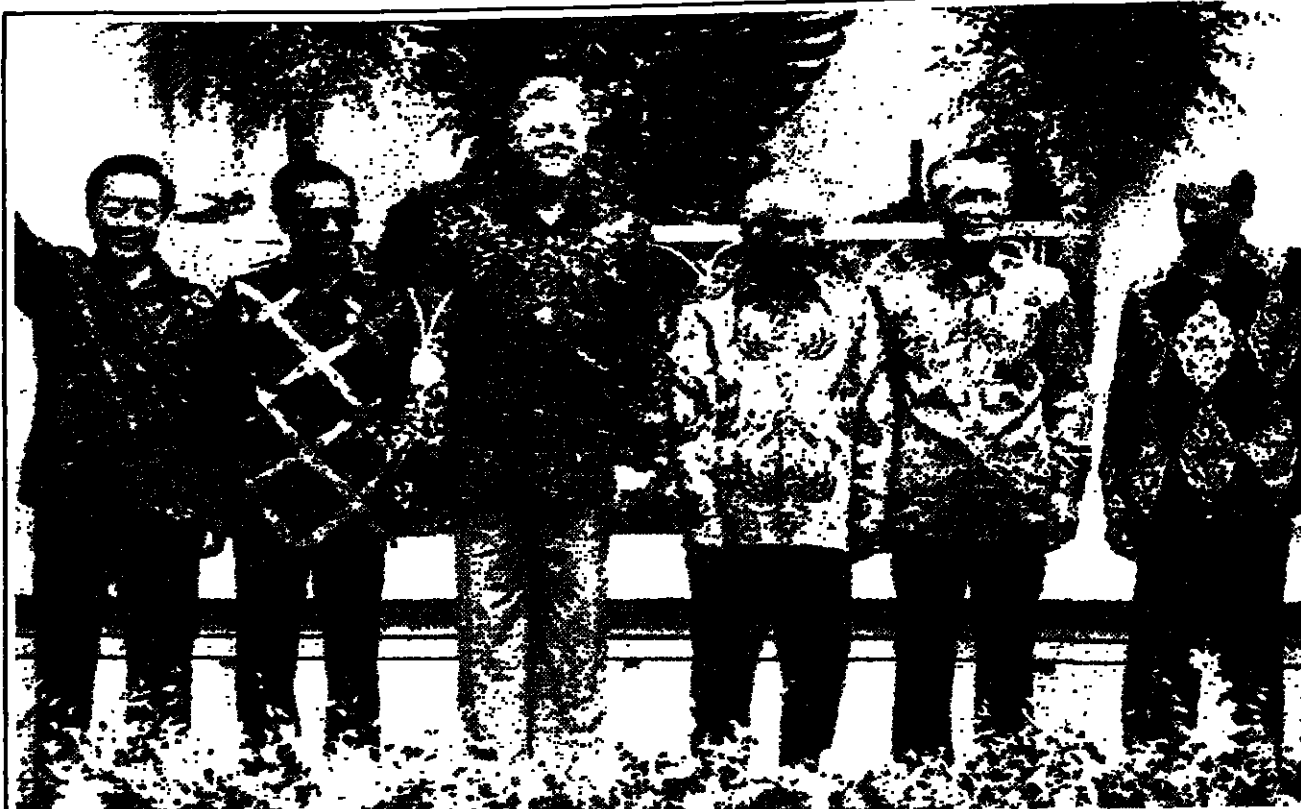
"Most of the civilian aid is for reimbursing Israeli debts to the American government," Mr. Peres told Israeli radio ahead of Mr. Rabin's departure.

A Bank of Israel spokesman told AFP that Israel pays \$1.2 billion a year to service the debts, which were run up in the 1970s and early 1980s when American military aid was provided as a loan.

For the past decade, however, this aid has been given as a straight grant.

Mr. Peres added that military aid should not be

(Continued on page 3)



APEC LEADERS: Leaders wave during the group photograph on the back steps of Bogor Palace at the sixth Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum (see page one). (From left) South Korean President Kim Young Sam, Malaysian Prime Minister

Mahathir Mohammad, U.S. President Bill Clinton, Indonesian President Suharto, Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama and Mexican President Carlos Salinas (AFP photo)

Turkey, Greece play down Aegean conflict

ANKARA (Agencies) — Ankara played down the threat of armed conflict between Turkish and Greek navies exercising in the Aegean on Tuesday, one day before a new treaty takes effect giving Greece the right to expand its territorial waters.

"There will be no incidents if nothing comes from the other (Greek) side," Foreign Minister Mumtaz Soysal was quoted as saying overnight to the Anatolian news agency. Mr. Soysal spoke in the Hague after meeting Greek counterpart Karolos Papoulias. "We don't expect the other side to take a decision that will compel us to use force. They will not take a step that will produce a bad result."

His words were the latest reaffirmation of Ankara's position that it will fight if Greece extends its territorial

waters to 12 nautical miles in the Aegean Sea, a move which Turks say would effectively deny Turkish ships passage to the high seas.

Greece says its parliament will ratify the Law of the Sea Convention granting the 12-mile limit but has not said if and when it will enforce it. Turkey has no plans to sign the treaty.

"There are certain things we cannot permit," Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller said. "We are not exploiting this issue internationally. We are not aggressors. We are not provocateurs."

In Athens, government spokesman Evangelos Venizelos repeated Greece's insistence it would not proceed with the extension.

Mr. Venizelos repeated his earlier insistence made Monday that Nov. 16 was not a significant date as "nothing is going to change" and that

Turkish leaders should not "interpret erroneously" Greece's position on the issue.

Mr. Venizelos had also said Monday the Greek parliament would ratify the sea convention in accordance with the policy of its European union allies, saying the terms of the convention would not have any immediate effect.

Mr. Soysal had earlier forecast an "apocalypse" and a Turkish victory if war broke out between the two rivals on the subject.

Ankara feels the convention, in awarding Greece 71.5 per cent of the Aegean as against its present 43.5 per cent, would result in an "unacceptable hegemony" for Athens as a regional maritime power.

Greece has said it has the "sovereign right" to extend

its waters but claims the move is not one of its "priorities."

But both sides moved Monday to defuse the tension as their foreign ministers met in the Dutch city of Noordwijk on the fringes of the Western European Union meeting over the Bosnian arms embargo.

"We will give nobody the satisfaction of seeing two neighbours make war on one another," Mr. Soysal said, while Greek counterpart Papoulias declared separate military manoeuvres by both sides this week would not be undermined by "incident."

In the meantime, Turkey continued with its manoeuvres in the Aegean, while Greece is set to start its own exercises in the area this week, despite a call from Washington for both nations to reschedule the operations.

NEWS IN BRIEF

8 killed, 60 injured in Algeria jail mutiny

ALGIERS (AFP) — At least eight inmates were killed and 60 injured on Monday in a mutiny started by Muslim fundamentalists at Berrouagha prison, 80 kilometres south of Algiers, the press reported Tuesday. One paper gave the number of dead as 11 after the security forces intervened. The mutiny began Sunday when some 20 inmates armed with knives, forks and other sharp weapons, tried to seize control of the prison, notably by setting fire to their bedding. Around 800 detainees are being held at the jail, the majority sentenced by special courts set up to deal with charges of terrorism and subversion, according to the daily El Watan. El Watan said there had been inadequate surveillance of the inmates and their families. Muslim prisoners had been giving common criminals instruction in "jihad" (holy war). Last March 1,000 Islamic fundamentalists escaped from a prison at Tazoult. Around half of them were killed by security forces pursuing them after the breakout.

Greenpeace ship docks at Beirut

BEIRUT (AP) — The Greenpeace ship SV Rainbow warrior docked at Beirut port Tuesday on an unprecedented visit by the environmental group to Lebanon. The ship, with 23 experts aboard, will spend four days in Lebanon, which is grappling with ecological problems compounded by the 1975-1990 civil war. "The visit is designed to introduce the international environmental organisation to the Lebanese people and to help raise awareness of environmental problems," said Mario Damato, Greenpeace Mediterranean coordinator. An exhibition to "illustrate the meaning of clean production and its feasibility in today's beleaguered Mediterranean environment," will be on display aboard the ship, he said in a statement. "We look forward to talks with Lebanese from all walks of life and to broadening the debate around the issue of clean production in Lebanon," added Mr. Damato. The vessel has been in the Mediterranean since August.

Carbomb explodes near Turkish embassy

BELGRADE (AFP) — A car bomb exploded Tuesday near the Turkish embassy and the Serbian presidential palace in Belgrade, police said. Police said a passenger of the car was injured in the blast but according to a Turkish diplomat, who asked not to be named, a passenger in the vehicle was killed. The diplomat said he did not believe the Turkish embassy was the target. The car blew up 20 metres from the embassy in front of the headquarters of a Belgrade company, Interkomerc. While windows close to the car were shattered, the embassy itself was left intact. The state news agency, Tanjug, attributed the explosion to a grenade in a Swiss-registered car.

British Gas strikes in Hadramaut

ADEN (AP) — A British company has struck gas in commercial quantities in the southern Yemeni province of Hadramaut, Oil Ministry officials said Tuesday. British Gas made the discovery as its team was drilling the last well to which it is committed in a concession area, known as Block 9. Hadramaut is about 650 kilometres southeast of the port city of Aden. The company was evaluating the strike, said the officials, who did not wish to be named. They said that British Gas also holds 49 per cent in Block 35, and the whole of Block 38 on the Red Sea island of Socatra. The company is to start with seismic surveys and drill two exploration wells in 1995 in the 3,000 square-kilometre concession it holds on Socatra.

Lebanon launches largest hospital

BEIRUT (R) — Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri in Beirut on Tuesday laid the foundation stone for what will be Lebanon's largest hospital. Construction of the 500-bed government hospital and medical school, which is to cost \$80 million, will be financed by the Lebanese government, the Islamic Development Fund, and the Saudi Development Fund. Mr. Hariri said work would start "very soon" on the first phase of the project, which will be carried out by a Saudi-Lebanese consortium at a cost of \$45 million over two years.

Yeltsin promotes Middle East envoy

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin's special envoy to the Middle East, Viktor Posuvalyuk, has been promoted to deputy foreign minister following Iraq's formal recognition of Kuwait, the ministry announced Tuesday. A career diplomat, Mr. Posuvalyuk played a key role in Russia's mediation with Baghdad — which formally recognised Kuwait last week, four years after invading the emirate. Mr. Posuvalyuk 54, worked in Yemen and Syria before taking up ambassadorships in Oman and Iraq.

PLO likely to delay meeting in Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee was expected to delay its meeting set for Tuesday in autonomous Gaza City because not enough members agreed to attend.

Suleiman Najjab, a leader of the Palestinian Communist Party, told the East Jerusalem newspaper Al Quds that he refused to take part in the first Executive Committee session to be staged in Gaza.

"There has not been any agreement for such a meeting to be held in Gaza and not Tunis, where the PLO has its official headquarters and the Executive Committee is based," said Mr. Najjab.

His refusal to attend raised to seven the number of Executive Committee members staying away.

The 18-member committee needed a quorum of 12 to meet on Tuesday, or else the session would be delayed for a day, until Wednesday, with a quorum of at least nine, under PLO rules.

Since the launch of Palestinian self-rule in May, seven Executive Committee members have been based in Gaza, including PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Another two members living abroad — Ali Ishaq and Mahmoud Ismail — had joined them by Tuesday, a public holiday in the self-rule areas for the anniversary of the PLO's proclamation of a Palestinian state on Nov. 15, 1988.

Before Mr. Najjab, several members based in Tunis and Amman had rejected meeting in Gaza and warned that Palestinian unity could be jeopardised.

Among those refusing to attend is PLO Political Department chief Farouq Kaddoumi. He called such a meeting "premature so long as the Israeli enemy has not withdrawn from all of Palestinian territory."

Another committee member, Mahmoud Abbas known as Abu Mazen, was also not expected to attend, according to a Palestinian source in Tunis where the PLO was headquartered before the launch of autonomy in May.

In Jordan, another four committee members said Sunday they would stay away for similar reasons to Mr. Kaddoumi. Two urged a boycott of the meeting.

Mr. Kaddoumi began a three-day visit to Pakistan on Tuesday, officials said in Islamabad.

He held talks with Foreign Minister Assef Ahmad Ali and signed a protocol on economic and cultural cooperation. Mr. Kaddoumi was also expected to meet Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

Turkish troops fire in air to disperse protesters

NICOSIA (AP) — Turkish troops fired in the air and clashed with stone-throwing Greek Cypriot demonstrators amid protest rallies Tuesday to mark the 11th anniversary of the creation of a breakaway state in occupied northern Cyprus.

Police said at least 10 students were slightly injured by flying stones in the village of Dherynia, on the outskirts of the Turkish-occupied port city of Famagusta. It was not clear if any Turkish Cypriots or mainland troops were hurt on the other side.

Elsewhere along the green line which slices the island into Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot sectors the rallies were relatively more peaceful.

Thousands of Greek Cypriots had thronged to the demarcation line since the early morning to denounce the Turkish Cypriots' proclamation of independence on Nov. 15, 1983.

They were mainly students given time off from schools to stage the rallies, which have

become an annual ritual. Carrying Greek and Cypriot flags, they gathered along the demarcation line, policed by United Nations forces.

In Dherynia, the students broke through Greek Cypriot police lines and a human barrier created by U.N. soldiers. As they got close to the Turkish troops' front line, the firing began.

Undeterred by the warning shots, the students began pelting the other side with stones and the Turkish troops responded in kind, police spokesman Glafcos Xenos said. He said the injured students were taken to nearby hospitals, but none of them was in serious condition.

In the capital, Nicosia, about 3,000 demonstrated at the Leda Palace crossing between the northern and southern sectors.

But Greek Cypriot riot policemen manned barbed wire barricades and blocked repeated attempts by the youths to break into the buffer zone.

'Syria, Egypt, Iraq and Iran Israel's enemies'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Syria heads the list of Israel's potential enemies, followed by Egypt, Iraq and Iran, the leading Israeli strategic analyst said here Tuesday.

"Syria is the greatest threat," said analyst Yishai Shapir at a press conference to launch the annual study of the Middle East Military Balance by Tel Aviv's Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies.

"It has Scud missiles, it has chemical warheads for the missiles. It is gaining more missiles from North Korea and acquiring a capability to produce them, which is rather new in the Middle East," he said.

Mr. Shapir listed Egypt second because, despite 15 years of peace with Israel, "one cannot disregard the existing capability to produce Scuds," Mr. Shapir recalled Egypt was the first country to use such missiles against Israel in 1973.

Iraq was today only the third major threat but Mr. Shapir warned that once the U.N. embargo on the country

was lifted, Baghdad would "gain the capability to produce chemical weapons in very short time."

"As long as Saddam Hussein is in power, I don't think he will give up his desire to acquire such weapons."

"There is absolutely no hard evidence that Iran is going to develop nuclear weapons," insisted the analyst. "Buying nuclear reactors is not the direct route to nuclear arms."

The centre's director, Josef Alpher, warned that despite the strategic gains for Israel from peace with Jordan and autonomy for the Palestinians, "the hard part is ahead."

He said the wave of extremism had yet to peak and that the redeployment of Israeli troops on the West Bank would only create "one hundred flash points."

He urged Israel to close off the Gaza Strip and West Bank permanently, keeping Palestinians out totally until peace could be ensured.

1,000 killed in Algeria in 9 days — FIS

BONN (AFP) — The Algerian military killed over 1,000 people, mostly civilians, in Algeria in a nine-day period at the beginning of this month, the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) said in a communiqué sent to the AFP office here Tuesday.

The communiqué charged that the Algerian military was responsible for an attack which killed four boy scouts on Nov. 1 during ceremonies commemorating Algeria's war of independence from France.

The military used the images of the attack — and of the child victims — to launch a media blitz against the fundamentalists it blamed.

FIS said, however, it had not carried out that attack and said government forces were to blame for the murder of two sisters that the government claimed had been killed by Islamic fundamentalists because they refused to enter into illegal "temporary marriages" with Islamic militants.

The communiqué said that the two sisters were in fact killed because their brothers were Islamic militants and their parents were supporters of the "Islamic project."

"Everyone knows that Sunni Muslims do not allow temporary marriages," the communiqué said. Sunni Muslims represent the main religion in Algeria.

The communiqué added that most of the people killed at the start of the month were "innocent civilians savagely massacred" as part of a sweeping military campaign to terrorise the population.

"The bodies are thrown on public roads, showing signs of mutilation and horrible torture," the communiqué said. It added that the government had banned various newspapers to prevent them from publishing the truth about the attacks and had distributed weapons to fuel conflicts setting one part of the population against another.

The FIS also charged that the government has received shipments of sophisticated weapons including fuel oxygen bombs that wipe out any living organism within a vicinity of one kilometre.

It said some of the weapons were furnished by an unidentified European country.

The authorities in Algeria reported that seven Muslim militants were killed Sunday

and Monday during two separate raids.

They said five of the militants were killed Monday near the eastern town of Constantine and two others were killed Sunday near the western town of Relizane.

The FIS and other Islamic groups in Algeria have waged a campaign to topple the government since January 1992, after the military intervened to cancel the second round of elections the FIS was poised to win.

The international human rights group Amnesty International said in a report last month that some 20,000-30,000 people have died in Algeria since 1992 in violence blamed on both sides of the conflict.

The emergence of an Islamic government in Algeria is "only a matter of time," a senior FIS member said in an interview published in Beirut Tuesday.

Anwar Hadam, head of the FIS parliamentary delegation abroad, told the Lebanese newspaper Al Nahar in Washington that if an Islamic state were not achieved through dialogue it would be obtained through "jihad" (holy war).

COLUMN

34-year-old author wins top prize

PARIS (AFP) — France's most coveted literary prize, the Prix Goncourt, was awarded Monday to 34-year-old Didier Van Cauwelaert for his novel "Un Aller Simple" (A One-Way Ticket). The jury announced. Although the cash value of the prize, instituted in 1903, is only 50 francs (\$9) the resultant publicity assures the winner of huge sales. By tradition the prize is awarded by the 10 members of the jury following a gourmet lunch at a top Paris restaurant. Van Cauwelaert is the author of seven novels and several theatrical pieces. His winning work is described as a mixture of comedy and tragedy. In the first round of voting there was a tie between "Un Aller Simple" and "La Fille Du Gouverneur" by Paule Constant, each receiving five votes. Van Cauwelaert won on the casting vote of the president of the jury, writer Hervé Bazin. Another major literary prize, the Prix Renaudot, was awarded to Guillaume Le Touze, aged 26, for his novel "Comme Tom Pere" (Like Your Father).

New high-profile charity role for Diana

LONDON (R) — Britain's Princess Diana assumed high-profile charity role after a troubled year of semi-retirement. She attended a reception where British Red Cross officials announced she was to head their fund-raising campaign for next year's 125th anniversary of the organisation. Newspapers, awash with stories of royal books picturing Princess Diana as lonely and unstable but determined to fight a hostile royal machine, have heralded this as the end of a withdrawal from public life she declared suddenly last December. "I'm coming back with a vengeance, you ain't seen nothing yet," one newspaper quoted her as saying earlier this month. Princess Diana, who will be the figurehead for the Red Cross celebrations and fund-raising ventures across the country, looked relaxed and chatted animatedly with other special guests at the event in a central London mansion. The estranged wife of heir-to-the throne Prince Charles did not speak publicly at the launch. A Buckingham Palace spokeswoman said Princess Diana had gradually increased her public engagements in recent weeks but added, "this (Red Cross role) should not be seen as a 'comeback'."

Milan museum asks to exhibit 'Codex Hammer'

MILAN (R) — A Milan museum said it wanted to show Leonardo da Vinci's "Codex Hammer," bought at an auction for a record \$30.8 million by Bill Gates, the billionaire chairman of Microsoft Corporation. The Leonardo da Vinci Museum of Science and Technology, which displays copies of da Vinci's drawings and models, said in a statement it was ideal for exhibiting the illustrated 16th-century manuscript of pre-modern science. Mr. Gates, the United States' richest person, was identified Saturday as the anonymous buyer of the "Codex Hammer," which predicted the invention of the submarine and the steam engine.

Gaidar fined \$300 for calling Zhirinovskiy fascist

MOSCOW (AFP) — Former Russian Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar was fined one million rubles (\$300) by a municipal court for calling ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy a fascist. Interfax reported Tuesday. The judge, who confirmed an earlier ruling by a lower court, said Monday that Mr. Gaidar had insulted Mr. Zhirinovskiy when he called him "the most popular fascist in Russia" in an article published in the daily Izvestia last May 17. Liberal Democratic Party made a strong and surprising showing in legislative elections last December, is currently on a visit to the United States.